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ISSUE 1 July 2000 £3.99

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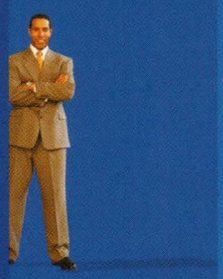

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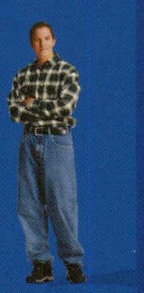

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Welcome

About five years ago I built my first Web page. I believed that learning to do so would help me to take part in a new revolution in technology. I had used a computer for several years previously and was relatively competent at using word processing and desk top publishing applications. I couldn't see that building a Web site would be that difficult.

So with the belief that it would be easy I set to work. I used the Internet to find tutorials and was amazed at the abundance of advice to be found there and soon had a file of reference material to wade through.

I quickly discovered that there were not many packages available to take the leg-work out of building my site and that I would have to learn how to code pages manually. Now I'm no technical expert, but as I started working through the guides and tutorials I began to realise that the code needed to build Web pages was basic and even a technophobe would come to grips with it easily.

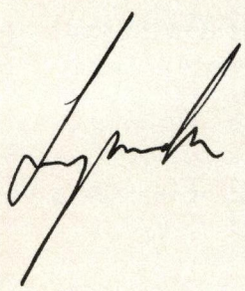
I started with a home page. I didn't mind that the page was purely for me, I wanted to prove that I could build one. Once I became more advanced I would show my pages to the world. I used HTML code to build the page and within 24 hours felt comfortable enough with the coding to start linking pages together and add some functionality. Using a scanner and a shareware graphics package I created my first pages. I was surprised at how simple and how much fun it all was.

Things have changed. The tools for building Web sites have become more widely available and they are extremely easy to use. Whatever your reason for wanting a Web site, anyone with a penchant to build one can do so at little expense and with relatively little brain-strain.

Inside *Practical Web Pages* you'll find step-by-step tutorials, advice, hints and pages of resources. We'll even show you how to make money from your site once it's published. All the software you need to build your site can be found on the *Practical Web Pages* CD. I wish that *Practical Web Pages* had been available when I started making Web pages. With jargon-free easy-to-follow instructions, all the necessary tools and guidance in one place I could have saved myself a lots of time searching for advice, and used it more productively to fine-tune my site.

I hope that you enjoy the magazine and that it prompts you to have a go yourself. Who knows, this could be your start to a new vocation.

Enjoy.



Lynda Burgess, Editor *Practical Web Pages*

Beginners

Beginning with the basics, **Practical Web Pages** *starts you off by giving you some good reasons for having a Web site. We show you how to get started and tell you the important things you'll need to consider before sitting down and getting creative.*

The beginner's tutorials show you how to create your first pages in FrontPage Express, how to use HTML (Hypertext Mark-up Language) and how to publish your site using Internet Explorer 5.

With handy insights into the programs and resources that Web site designers use, you'll be well-prepared to move on to the next section.

Intermediate

With an overview of Web design and some useful pointers under your belt you'll be ready to tackle the tutorials in the Intermediate section. **Practical Web Pages** *looks at some of the widely-used design elements, tables with FrontPage Express, how to use the clip art that you'll find on the cover CD and how to effectively promote your Web site once it's built.*

If you've developed an eye for design and want to find out more, our Fireworks tutorial will teach you how to create some great graphics to use on your site.

Expert

Moving on. In the **Practical Web Pages** *expert section you'll find information about registering a domain name – with the chance to win your own personal domain. Imagine yourname@yourhouse.com.*

And for those of you who've now been bitten by the Web design bug we've some expert tutorials for style sheets and email forms using HoTMetaL PRO – you'll find the full version of this powerful Web design tool on the Practical Web Pages cover CD.

With help on style issues and expert advice **Practical Web Pages** *is packed with valuable content to entice you to build your first Web site.*

Practical Web Pages
The easy way to build a Web site
Issue 1 July 2000

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On the CD

HotMetaL Pro 4
Full program of this powerful Web design and site management tool.

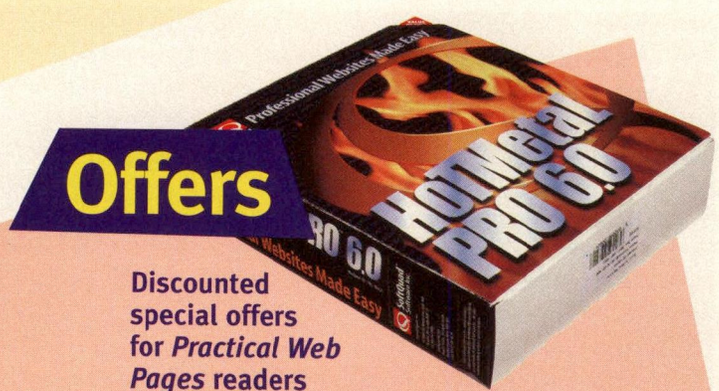
Clip art
5,000 clip art images to enhance and bring your Web pages to life.

Fireworks 3 (30-day trial version)
Use this powerful graphics package to create buttons, banners and logos.

AddWeb 2
Get your site noticed by submitting your site to search engines across the Web.

Web browsers
Internet Explorer 5 Netscape 4.73

Offers



Discounted special offers for *Practical Web Pages* readers

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Beginners

Discover the essentials of Web design. Work through page layout tutorials to get you started

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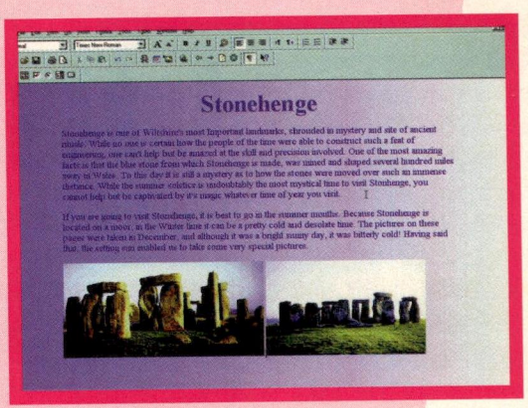

Use FrontPage Express to create your first Web pages. See page 18-23

Intermediate

With an overview of Web design and some useful pointers you'll be ready to create graphics like a pro

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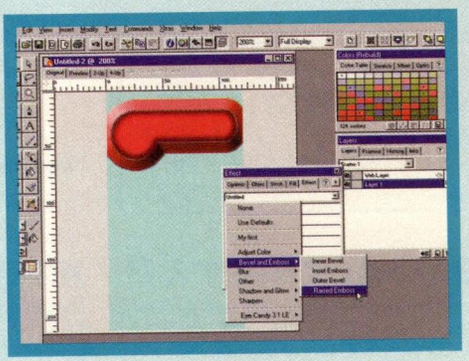
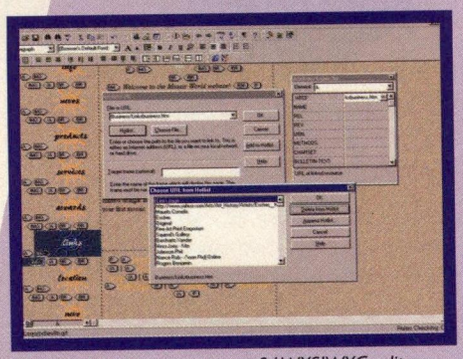


Make great graphics by following the Fireworks tutorials on pages 46-51

Expert

All the information and advice you could hope for about making the most of your site



Master one of the most powerful WYSIWYG editors available. Pages 64-69

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On the CD

You'll find all the software you'll need to help you to build your Web site

All the software you need to build your own Web site
Full program worth £116*
HotMetaL PRO 4.0
A complete Web Site creation and management tool — *originally sold for £116.
AddWeb 2 v2
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Fireworks 3
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5000 clip art images
A massive 5000 images that you can use anywhere on your Web site.
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Practical Web Pages
The easy way to build a Web site

Small Print

Our CD has been thoroughly scanned and tested at all stages of production. We recommend that you always run a virus checker on any software before you run it. Future Publishing Ltd cannot accept any responsibility for disruption, damage and/or loss to your data or your computer system which may occur while using this CD, the programs or the data on it. Ensure that you have up-to-date back-ups of the data contained on your hard drive before running any new software.

How to use your cover CD

From the *Practical Web Pages* CD interface, simply choose what you'd like to install, click on the icon and off you go!

Windows 95/98

1 Insert the Practical Web Pages disc into your CD-ROM drive and it will run automatically.
2 If it doesn't, select Start, then Run, then D:\practical (where D is your drive letter), and then press Enter.
3 The *Practical Web Pages* menu program will run and you will see the start-up screen.
4 Click on the name of the software you wish to install and follow the on-screen instructions.

What to do if your CD doesn't work

1 Don't panic! If the menu runs but a program doesn't install, try copying the installer from the CD over to your computer's hard disk and installing it from there.
2 Check the CD support page (www.futurenet.com/support) for solutions to problems that have already been encountered by other readers. It's probably a lot easier than you might think!
3 If your problem isn't covered, email technical support at pracweb.support@futurenet.co.uk including full details of your operating system, the issue of the disc you're having problems with and the programs you're trying to use.
4 If you don't have access to email, fax your query to our technical support department on 01225 732310 or speak to them on 01225 822743 between 9.30am and 5.30pm.
5 If your CD is damaged or can't be read at all by your CD-ROM drive, you can get a replacement by sending it to: *Practical Web Pages* CD Returns, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW.

What's on the CD...

HotMetaL Pro 4

Full program of this powerful Web design and site management tool.

Clip art

5,000 clip art images to enhance and bring your Web pages to life.

Fireworks 3 (30-day trial version)

Use this powerful graphics package to create buttons, banners and logos.

AddWeb 2

Get your site noticed by submitting your site to search engines across the Web.

Web browsers

Internet Explorer 5
Netscape 4.73

Get online for free with Madasafish

1 Insert the cover disc into your PC. Select the Madasafish option. Click Install Madasafish.

2 A screen now welcomes you. Once you've accepted the agreement, click on the Next button at the bottom of the screen to continue the installation.

3 A setup window will come up. Select the type of installation option you prefer. Install Now is the easiest way to go. Click on Next.

4 Wait for the setup to complete.

5 When prompted, restart your computer. It will take a few moments for the configurations to update.

6 A registration screen will appear. Click on Connect to continue. You will need to fill out a few details about yourself.

7 You must be dialling from the UK to fill out your details and get online. Make sure the phone number you fill in is the one you will be using when you connect to Madasafish.

8 The next screen asks you to choose a username and password. You'll also be asked to choose a security question - just in case you forget your password.

9 Click on Finish and you details will come up for you to check. If you're happy click on Finish. Your modem will now dial and connect to the Madasafish home page.

Don't forget...

If you have any problems while installing or using the Madasafish software then call the Madasafish technical support line on 09010 222324. Calls are charged at 25 pence per minute.

Why have a Web site

It's a good question. Why would you want to use your precious time to build your own Web site? Read on and hopefully you'll find answer and the inspiration to get you started

The Internet is an international network of computers providing us with a fantastic medium for communication and the exchange of information across the globe. As well as giving us access to a wealth of information, the Net provides us with the opportunity to contribute to this vast pool of knowledge. Anyone can design and create a Web site on any topic – there is complete freedom of expression on the Internet. The possibilities are endless. So if you've always wanted to express yourself and have a forum where other people can tap into your thoughts, ideas, passions and hobbies, you'll find that the Internet provides the ideal outlet for you to do so.

Designing a Web site used to be a job reserved for the professional Web site designer with a degree in computer programming and knowledge of programming languages such as HTML (HyperText Markup Language). Nowadays there's heaps of software available to make the task so straightforward that just about anyone can design a simple Web site. Using a software package such as FrontPage Express, for example, is similar to using a Windows word processing package – that's how straightforward it can be. You can create a Web site easily.

Our cover CD includes all the Web design software you'll need to make your own site, including FrontPage Express, and we'll be guiding you through the design process step-by-step helping you to create some great-looking Web pages in a matter of minutes.

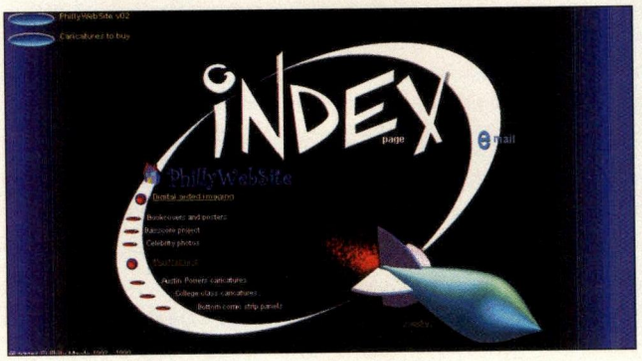
Not only is easy to design your own Web site, it's cheap too. Most Internet Service Providers, including Madasafish – which you'll ind on the *Practical Web Pages* cover CD – provide Web space on their servers free of charge (turn to page 28 for details of how to publish your Web site). So, all you need is a computer, some software, a copy of this magazine and you're away!

The purpose

You'll need a motivation for creating a Web site. Maybe you're naturally curious, or intrinsically artist or there's a burning subject that you want to tell the world about. These are all worthy reasons for building a Web site, but one thing's for sure, before you sit down in front of your PC, with your creative juices flowing and start putting your thoughts together you will definitely need a purpose. There's a multitude of worthwhile reasons for getting a Web site on the Internet. Let's ignore the millions of people who have devoted Web sites to their beloved tabbies, poodles and goldfish for a few moments, and consider the more sensible options.

Businesses

The most obvious motivation for setting up a Web site is for advertising a business. The Internet can act as a powerful promotional tool, giving businesses access to a huge pool of potential customers. Its interactivity increases this power tenfold as it enables you to start a dialogue with visitors to your site. Email links are important features for business Web sites as they allow customers to contact you easily at any time with queries or orders. Including a registration form on your Web site (we will be showing you how to do this on pages 66-67) will help you to obtain a profile of your visitors and installing a Web counter will help you to gauge

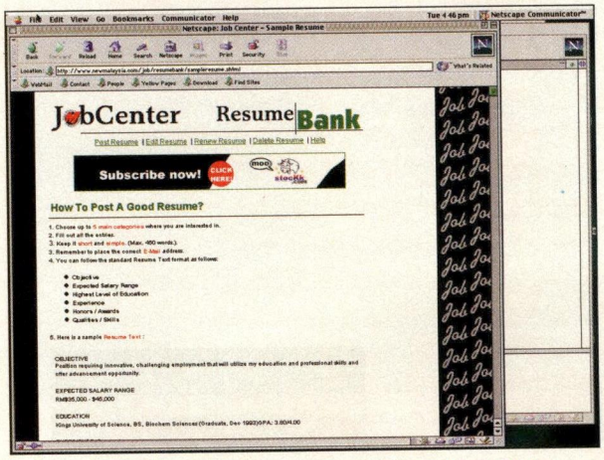


Art student Philly Maude has included an email link on most pages of his site so that visitors can easily contact him, hopefully with work orders!

the level of interest. Much more effective than your old-fashioned paper brochure, isn't it?

CVs

It's not just businesses that can be promoted via the Internet, anyone can promote their skills online. Gone are the days when looking for a new job involved trawling through the ads in the newspaper or trudging down to the job centre in the rain. Just put your CV online to attract the attention of employers you would never have been able to reach otherwise. Remember that you can



Put your CV online and point prospective employers in its direction when you're looking for work

point prospective employers in the direction of your CV in the first instance. You should always send them a hard copy to if they request it. Ask. It shows initiative. Make sure it looks professional. There's nothing more off-putting than putting a shoddy site on the Internet. It reflects on you. So spend some time honing your CV and making sure that it makes the right impression.

Art student Philly Maude used his Web site (freespace.virgin.net/philly.m) to showcase a wide selection of his artwork.

Hints & tips

Look to your audience

Think about your audience before you start designing your Web site. If your site is for business purposes, for example it would be wise include an email link and a form for example.

KISS

Don't get carried away with your designing. Start off with a simple layout and build on that as you become more experienced. Photos are great, but if you overdo it you will quickly use up your Web space and slow down your site.

Jargon Buster

Chat room
This is a Web site where you can exchange text messages in real time.

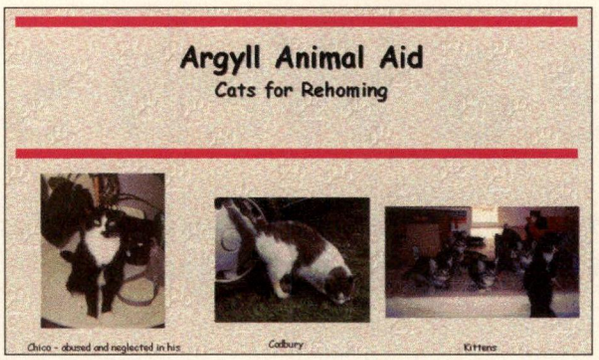
Hit
When someone visits a Web site, that visit is described as a hit. Web sites will often tell you how many hits they have received so far. Web counters measure hits.

HTML (HyperText Markup Language)
This is the basic programming language used to create Web pages.
ISP (Internet Service Provider)
This is a company that provides access to the Internet.

Server
This is a large, fast computer which serves smaller computers.

Web counter
This is a piece of software that will count the number of 'hits' or times a visitor goes to your Web site.

Web space
The space on a Web server that is allocated for hosting a Web site. Many ISPs give away free Web space so that you can build your own Web site and store it on its server.



The Net can help good causes too. Pat Blunsden uses her Web site to find homes for stray animals

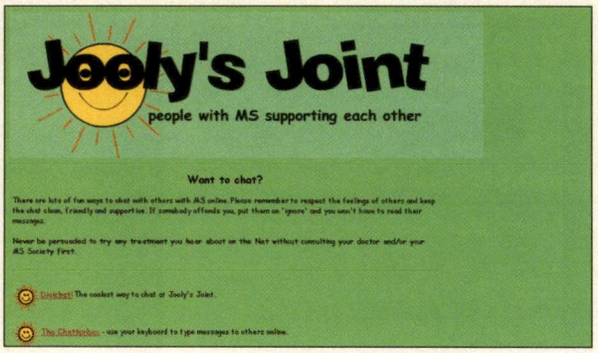
Using FrontPage Express from the cover CD of a magazine, Philly got his Web site up and running in just six weeks. He included an email link to allow his site visitors to get in touch with him. Philly's illustrations range from caricatures of celebrities such as Austin Powers (Mike Myers) to some of his college chums. Visitors to the site are offered the opportunity to have personal caricatures done – for a fee of course!

Good causes

It's not all about self-interest either, Web sites are great ways of drumming up support for good causes and attracting volunteers to charities. Scotland's Pat Blunsden set up the Argyll Animal Aid Web site (freespace.virgin.net/p.blunsden/index.html) to publicise the small animal rescue team she set up on the West Coast of Scotland. "I set up the Web site to advertise Argyll Animal Aid and, hopefully, attract more members," says Pat. "As we're all volunteers we rely totally on donations to run the charity." Pat set up the site using Microsoft's Publisher software and had no previous experience or knowledge of HTML. "The mere thought of HTML brings me out in a cold sweat," laughs Pat.

Special interests

If you have a special interest, the Internet is a great way of sharing them with others whether they are gaming, comics or even spiders.



With chat rooms, medical news, competitions, stories and poems, there are lots of good reasons for tapping www.mswebpals.org into your browser

Wayne Kettlewell set up Arachnocity, a site devoted to his favourite hobby: spiders. Arachnocity receives over 30 hits each week and has proved that special interest sites can have a useful purpose too. "I even get emails from people trying to get rid of their fear of spiders," says Wayne, "saying that the site has helped them look at tarantulas in a new light. It's this sort of feedback that makes me think I have done my job properly." This is an extremely satisfying way of exposing your interest and if you promote your site effectively (see pages 52-53) you'll be surprised by the number of people who want to be involved.

Personal forums

Web sites provide really useful discussion forums and are a great way of getting in touch with like-minded people. This is particularly useful if you find it hard to meet people because you live in a remote part of the country or if you find it hard to get around because of illness, even if you don't live remotely you'll find that discussion forums provide you with a great way to relax. Five years ago, Julie Howell used HotMetal PRO (on our cover CD) and some HTML coding to set up Jooly's Joint (www.mswebpals.org) – an email pen pal service for fellow-sufferers of multiple sclerosis. Jooly's Joint contains lots of interesting information and resources for MS sufferers, such as a chat room, links to other users' sites, bulletin boards and forums. Jooly's Joint now has an impressive 10,000 members and Julie wishes she'd had the support of the Internet when she was first diagnosed with MS. "I think the Web has great potential for improving disabled people's lives," says Julie. "The ability to meet others who are going through the same trials and struggles is invaluable – it's empowering, positive and supportive."

David Hartley's Driver site is a veritable paradise for gamers

Fun

Web sites have huge potential for fun as well as worthy causes. Whether your idea of a good time involves comics, stitching patterns or gaming, you're bound to find someone who shares your interests online. Nottinghamshire's David Hartley was so passionate about gaming that he built an entire Web site devoted to one of his favourite games: Driver. Using his parents' PC and Net Fusion 2 software, which he got free from a magazine's cover CD, David created Driver Zone (www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/3791/index.html) in just one day. David first got interested in the Net to find information on his games. "In my opinion the Internet is a great thing. You can upload what you enjoy doing most on to the Net and thus meet other people with the same interests."

Conclusion

So as you can see the common theme running through all the reasons for having a Web site seems to be that having one provides a powerful means of communication. Creating your own Web site will open doors to a whole world of new people with similar interests. Whatever your reason for creating a Web site, be sure to plan your site carefully before you start designing it. Write down some ideas on pen and paper and think carefully about your purpose and the type of visitors that you would like to attract. How should your site look in order to do this most effectively? If your Web site is for a financial business, for example, it should (obviously) appear business-like, sombre and professional but if it is a discussion forum it should appear friendly and welcoming. (Turn to pages 12-13 for more tips about planning your Web site.) If you are stuck, surf the Net for ideas. Look at Web sites with a similar purpose to yours and use them as inspiration for your site. Whatever you decide to do, you'll find lots of help on these pages. Happy designing! ■

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Things to include on your Web site

So, you've decided that you're going to dedicate your entire Web site to your beloved Poodle, Brian. Great. But what exactly are you going to put on it?

Jargon Buster

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)
This is a file format for saving images so that they can be viewed by a Web browser.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)
This is a file format with a compressed image which reduces the file size for faster loading of images.

AVI file (Audio Video Interleaved)
This is a sound and motion picture file that conforms to the Microsoft Windows Resource Interchange File Format (RIFF) specification. AVI files (which end with an .avi extension) require a special player that may be included with your Web browser or may require downloading.

Once you've decided why you'd like to have a Web site, you might like to consider the different elements you could include on it. You don't have to decide how it all fits together yet, we look at that on pages 12–16, but it would be helpful if you knew the limitations of what you could include and how easy (or complicated) it might be to include them.

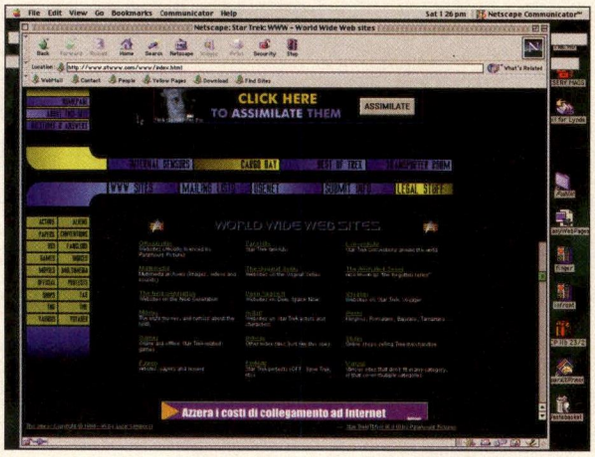
Many of these examples are relatively straightforward to insert into your pages, with a little piece of code either embedded into your HTML (the programming code used to create Web pages) page or simply added to the source in your WYSIWYG (What You See is What you Get) editor. You don't have to go away and add them to your pages immediately, simply use them as inspiration. They'll show you what you can achieve with a little perseverance and once you're feeling a little more confident you can add some of the ideas yourself.

If you've spent time looking around the Internet, pin-pointing your favourite sites and identifying techniques, you may already have some ideas of the types of thing that you'd like to include on your own site. Let's see if we can show you how they work and how you might incorporate them.

Common things to include

LISTINGS

People with a passion have spent many hours looking around the Internet, identifying their favourite sites and pulling together the ones that interest them most. Some of the listings they have created have become cult classics on the Internet like www.stwww.com and www.startrek.com. If you're keen to share your interest you can develop a directory of fascinating Web sites that you like and feel would interest other people too. This is one of the easiest pages to create. All you need to know is how to make links on the page. We show you how to make links on pages 20–21.



For a cult listing of Web sites devoted to *Star Wars*, look no further than www.stwww.com

US online version of *Cosmopolitan*'s site asks lots of questions

PICTURES

Adding pictures to your site can add dimension. A text-driven site can provide oodles of information, but support it with pictures and it immediately grabs a visitor's attention. Remember, though, that pictures can be quite memory-intensive and can take a while to download onto the page. It's important to keep your picture files small as visitors will get bored and leave your site if they have to wait too long to see a picture. There are two main file formats used for Web pictures: GIFs and JPEGs. A GIF image file tends to be smaller than a JPEG file, but a JPEG image tends to be better quality. If quality is important, consider using thumbnails in the first instance with a link to a bigger, better quality picture; GIF first with a link to a JPEG. If you plan to use pictures you'll need a scanner, or some clip art (there are 5,000 images on our cover disc) and a graphics package that will save in either GIF or JPEG format. On pages 18–19 we show you how you how to add pictures to your page.

FORMS

One of the joys of the Internet is that you can exchange information with other Internet users. As it is an interactive media, you can post questionnaires online, someone in New York, Manchester or Sydney can fill out the form and with one click on a button, you'll have answers delivered directly to your PC in London, Bristol or Edinburgh – wherever you may be. So, if you want other people to be involved in your interest or you want their opinions,

why not set up a questionnaire? However, remember that people are private, so assure visitors of their privacy, don't ask for their email address, don't use the information for anyone other than yourself and make sure you let them know your intentions on your site. Check out pages 66–67 and follow our step-by-step instructions for creating forms with HoTMetaL Pro.

EMAIL CONTACT

Another way to encourage visitors to talk to you is by posting your own email address on the site. By clicking an email link directed to your address, visitors can post you their comments, thoughts and ideas. If you particularly want people to contact you make a point of telling them they can in your text. Setting up a contact is extremely easy, you simply set up a link with <mailto:.....@.....>, adding your email address after the mail to: link. Turn to pages 20–21 to find out how to do this with FrontPage Express.

A bit more daring

Whilst we don't show you how to add animations and sound in this issue of *Practical Web Pages*, just remember that they too can be added by embedding a simple piece of code onto your page. Use pages 34, 58 and 84 to find more about how you add them.

ANIMATIONS

Animations are created in a graphics package. A series of static images are linked together and turned into a GIF file. The animation can then be added to your page. Inevitably the file will be larger than a static one, so remember that the download time could be affected. Also, be careful where you use animations, at times they can be off-putting and detract from the focus of your site. Designers use them for banner ads. Notice when you're surfing how your eye is always drawn to the moving banner.

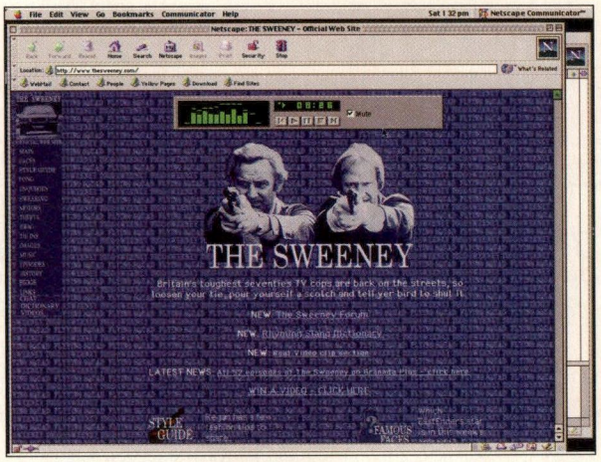
SOUND

There's an on-going debate about the value of adding sound. Many PC beginners don't turn their speakers on, unless they know that there's something to listen to. So if you plan to use sound as a background to your site, you may find that it has no impact (except to slow it down) as nobody's listening! If you use sound, record it onto your PC with a program like RealPlayer as an AVI file and embed it into the page. Make sure the file is highlighted on the page so that a visitor knows there is something to listen to.

The full Monty

We've looked at Web site content that you can create and add yourself. Now we'll have a look at some of the gadgets created by enthusiasts and made available to everyone using the Internet.

For bike enthusiasts, a Web site devoted to their favourite machines would not be terribly exciting without pictures



***The Sweeney*'s Web site is so detailed and complete that the TV producers made it the official site**

There's obviously no value in re-inventing the wheel and programmers have become wise to this. So, often when a programmer or designer develops a useful gadget that could enhance your Web site, they make it available to the whole Internet population as shareware or freeware. Everyone can use it then and it doesn't need re-inventing over and over again.

TICKERS

Tickers are often used for highlighting key features or pages on your site. Typically links are run through a box sitting on your page which is 2cm wide by 5cm long. Visitors can pass their cursors across the link and click on it to be directed to the linked feature. This is a great tool if you want to save space on a page yet still guide people to as much content as you can offer.

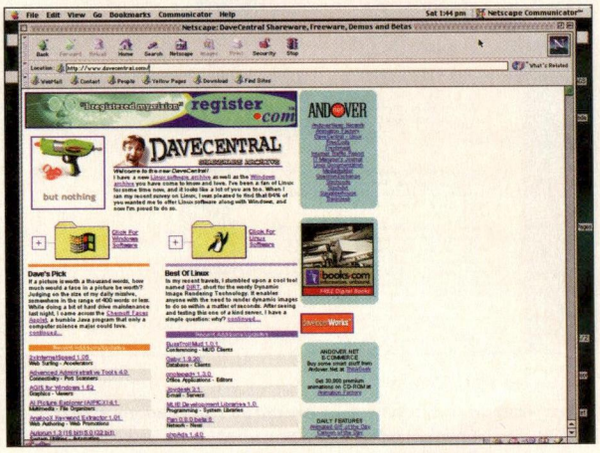
COUNTERS

Keep a check on the number of visitors to your site: a counter will record every visit.

CALENDARS

Keep your front page current by inserting the date and time. It will update automatically, so the page will always remain up-to-date even if you don't change the content.

There are some great pieces of code available and if you visit www.freewarehome.com or www.davecentral.com you'll find literally thousands of ideas for your site. ■



At davecentral.com you can find software for all types of Web site design and it's completely free

Jargon Buster

Freeware
Simply put, this is fully featured software which you can use free of charge.

Mailto
When a mailto: link is clicked on, a new email opens on the user's screen. They can then enter an email, press 'send' and it will be delivered to the mail to: addressee.

Shareware
This is software you can use free for a limited time. You usually have to credit the developer on your Web site. If you find it useful and want to use the full version you need to register and pay a nominal fee to the developer.

Hints & tips

Don't overdo it!
Don't include everything in your first site. A Web site is not finite. You can always add new features later.

Keep it simple
Simplicity is the key to an effective Web site. You'll often deliver a stronger message with a simple concept.

Designing your We

Before you set up your basic Web page, here are some handy Web design tips to ensure that your site stays a cut above the rest

So, you've decided what the purpose of your Web site is going to be and you know what you're going to include. Great. Now the hard work is over and the next stage is to just to get some software and get on and do it, isn't it? Well, not quite. Before you get stuck into the nitty-gritty of Web site building you need to consider the design. After all, the more pleasurable your Web site is to browse, the longer your visitors will stay on it and see what you have to say, buy what you have to sell and, of course, come back for more.

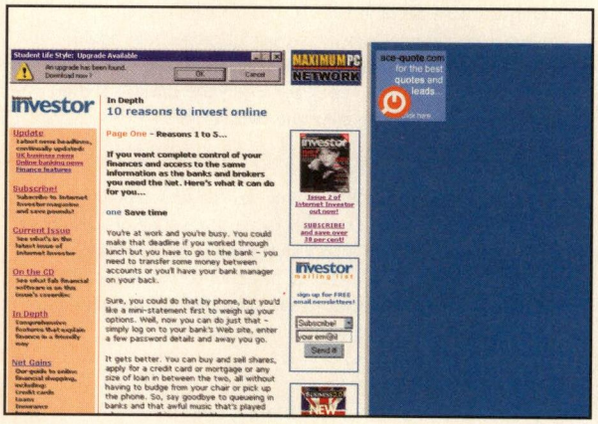
Good Web design revolves around two key ideas: keep it simple and keep it fast. Users want to be able to find their way around your site without getting confused, and they don't want to be bombarded with too much information. Most of all, they don't want to be waiting around for ages while your pages download into their

Jargon Buster

HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)
This is the special code that creates all Web pages. Your Web browser translates this code into the images and text that you see on your screen.

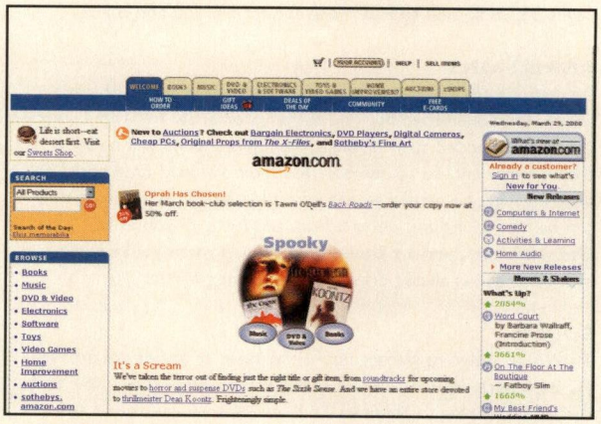
Pixels
The standard unit of measurement for Web pages. 600 pixels is the standard width of a Web page if you want to make sure Web surfers can see it on any computer.

Resolution
The size of the display on a computer's monitor. The higher the resolution, the more information can be seen on the screen. You can play with your screen resolution on a PC by clicking on the following menu options: Settings, then Control Panel, Display, Settings and finally Screen Area.



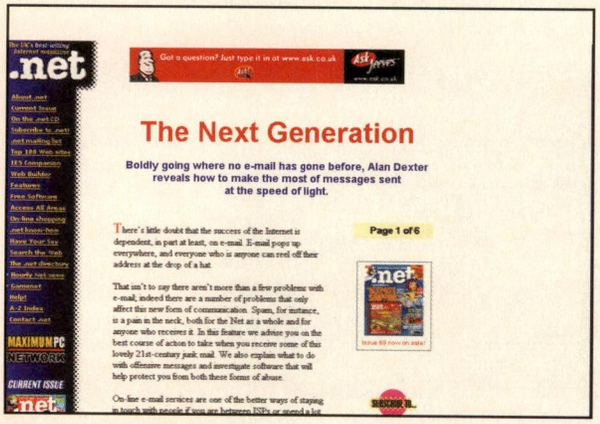
Put your text in a table

Text is a lot easier for the eye to read if it doesn't stretch too far across the computer's screen. You can control the width of text on a Web page by putting it inside a table. The best width for text is about 350 to 400 pixels, which is around the same width as text in a paperback book. The main body of text in the Web page above is about this width.



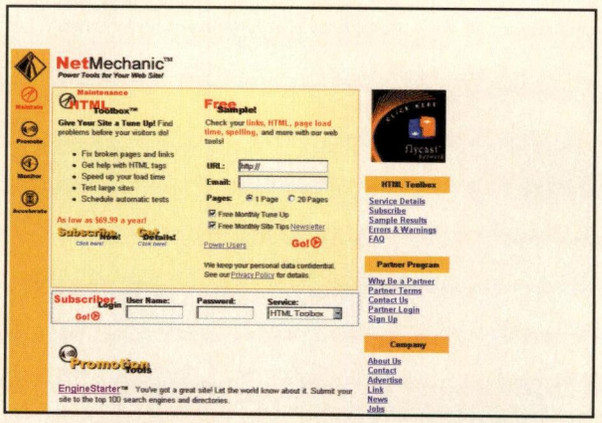
Be careful with colour

Using colour is obviously a great way of making your Web site look more attractive, but don't go mad with the colour palette at your disposal. Choosing three or four colours and using them consistently throughout your site will look a lot more attractive. White is still the best background colour because it makes text easy to read (see above).


.net
The Next Generation
Boldly going where no e-mail has gone before, Alan Dexter reveals how to make the most of messages sent at the speed of light.
Page 1 of 6

Have fun with fonts

If you want to make sure that everyone can read your text, stick to the standard Web fonts: Times New Roman, Arial, Helvetica and Verdana. Verdana is a particularly useful font, because it was specially developed by Microsoft to make Web text easier to read from a computer's screen.



Go easy with the graphics

The biggest single cause of Web pages taking too long to download is that they have too many graphics. Use images sparingly and make sure their file size is as small as possible so that they download quickly. NetMechanic (www.netmechanic.com) has a free image compression tool.

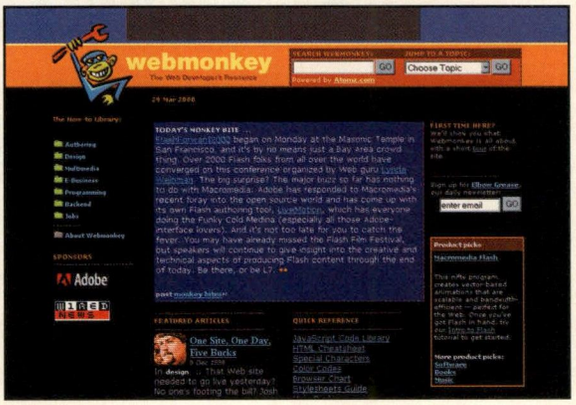
b site

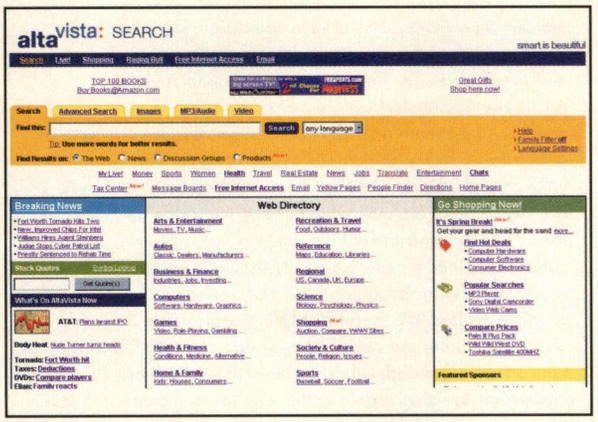
Web browsers. Web user surveys indicate that if the page hasn't loaded within 10 seconds, most Web surfers are likely to lose patience and move on elsewhere. In most cases it's costing them money as well as time.

Of course, the good thing about keeping it simple and fast is that anyone can do it with a bit of thought. These tips should help you on your way to making your Web site a sight for sore eyes.

Hints & tips

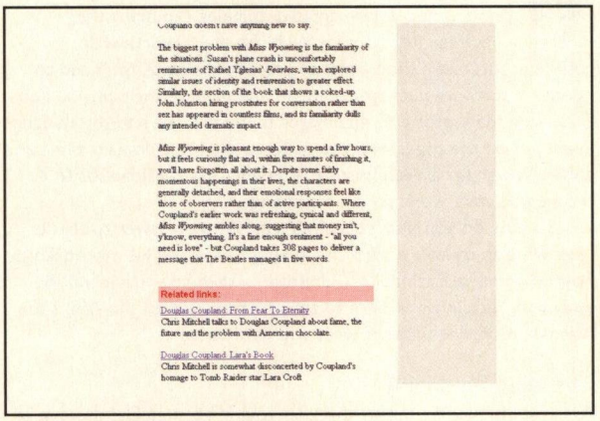
• Webmonkey (www.webmonkey.com) has an excellent range of articles about good Web site design and the thinking behind it. Click the Design folder on its front page for a range of options. Our sister magazine .net also has stacks of tutorials and helpful Web design advice online at www.netmag.co.uk /webbuilder.





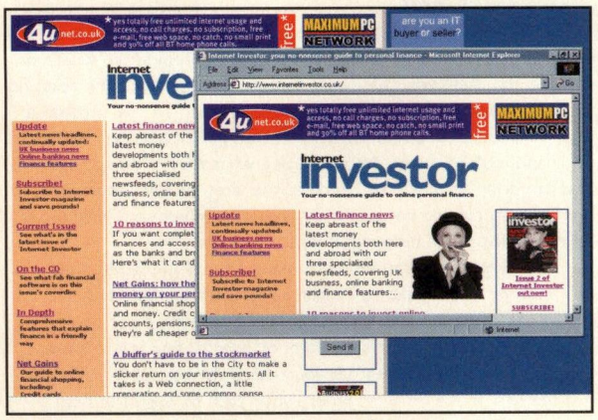
Give yourself a title

Don't forget to use the <TITLE> tag to name your page properly. Don't just call it 'Page One' or something generic, but clearly and concisely state the page's subject in the title. That way you let readers know what the page is about straightaway and enable search engines like AltaVista (www.av.com) to find your site more easily.



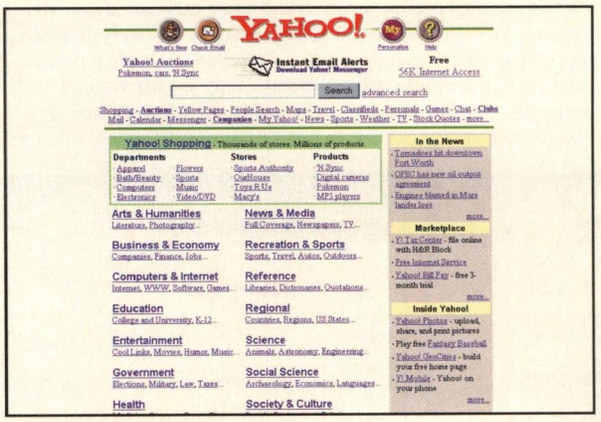
Learn your links

Don't use underlined text on any of your Web pages. Save underlining exclusively for hyperlinks as underlining normal text can get confusing. If you need to emphasise text, use the bold tag <B>. Place relevant links at the end of a piece of writing as shown above, rather than linking words within it – that way it's less distracting.



Make sure everyone can see your site

Many people still surf the Web using 640 x 480 resolution on their PCs, which means that if you make your Web pages more than 600 pixels wide, they'll have to scroll sideways to see all your content, which is not ideal. The picture above shows the same site at two different resolutions, and it works with both.



Inspiration not innovation

Don't make your visitors fight to find information on your Web site by making the layout and navigation too wacky. Look at successful sites like Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com) and see how they do it. Obviously, don't lift their Web site design wholesale, just use it for inspiration. ■

Hints & tips

Make mistakes

Don't worry if you make a mistake, Web sites are not finite and if you publish something that you don't like, you can go back in later and change it.

Send emails

When you've published your site, spread the word. Send emails to your friends, associates and family to let them know what you've done.

Planning your Web site

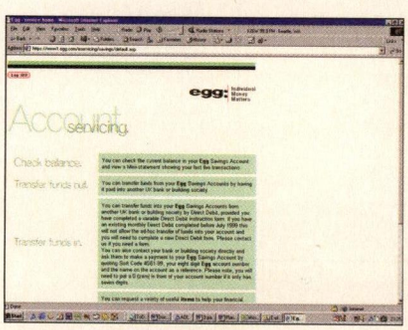
Do you want to build a Web site that's really worth visiting? Then you need to do a little planning first

When everyone and his dog has a Web site, how do you stop yours looking like it was written by the dog? Good planning and a little creative thinking can make the difference between just another Web site and a worthwhile resource, successful shop front or promotional tool. You need to choose a software package to create and manage the site, you need to source the words and the images that you'll use and the design you'll put on the pages, and you need to choose a domain name and a Web server (or a Web hosting company), but there's a lot to do before you start work on your first page.

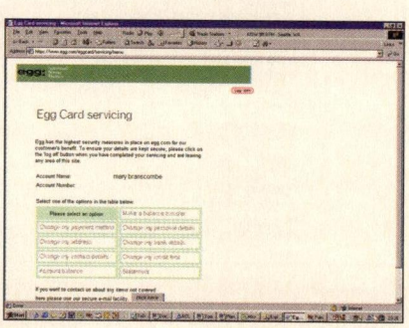
So how do you plan your Web site? If your answer to that is "yes, we plan to have a Web site, now go away and let me work out how to create a Flash rollover button" – then your users will go away too. Luckily, we're here to tell you how to plan the Web site that will make the most of what you have to say.

The need for speed

Are you planning to sell anything on your Web site? The thought of parting with money tends to make people impatient: they're usually looking for something specific by the time they get to your site so they'd rather search than browse. The latest research suggests you have about ten seconds to get your page on screen before your potential shopper gets impatient and goes looking for someone else to spend their money with. That means a decent Web server with adequate bandwidth, no large graphics or fancy animations to slow it down and certainly no Shockwave movie to introduce the site. We're not saying that all designers should be nailed to a chair and forced to surf the Web with a 33,6K modem on a 640x480 screen set to 256 colours to remind them what the Web is like for most users – but it would be a start. There's simply no call for huge image files or large multimedia files on the average Web site: too many animated logos just make people feel slightly seasick. If you do need a lot of images, think about how to get them onto the page more quickly: reuse a graphic or pre-load them on a page of text that people are likely to spend time reading.



Navigate the egg Web site to find the account section, log in and that's where you'll find choices for working with your egg savings account



To get to your credit card account you have to log out and in again and the interface for similar options is completely different: confusing and frustrating

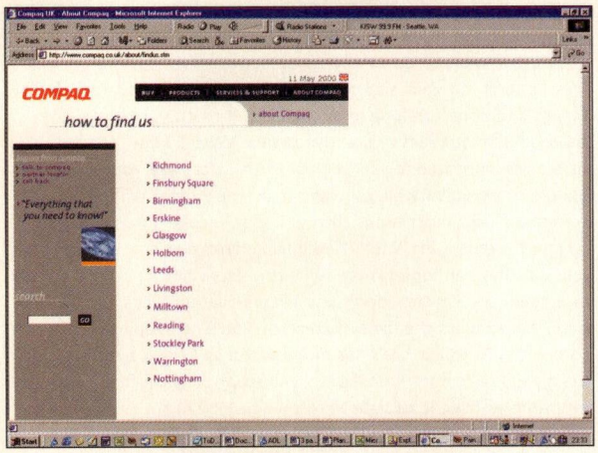
Where am I? Navigation bars

No-one likes feeling confused, or lost. From signposts and compasses to maps and GPS systems, we've spent centuries developing tools for finding our way around. A good navigation system will help your users as they move through the site – and remember not to confuse them for the sake of design by changing the colour of visited hyperlinks to match your colour scheme. If all the links on the page are purple the first time I visit, why would I bother clicking on any of them? The navigation tool can be in a frame or in a consistent place on every page. It should show the main structure or sections of your site and provide an obvious way to move around. It's useful if it tells people where they are as well: highlighting the current page helps them to learn how your site is organised. Don't get so attached to your navigation bar that it gets in the way of your content: if it's flash, fancy and filling half the screen, that's what people will look at and they may never get to clicking on the pages.

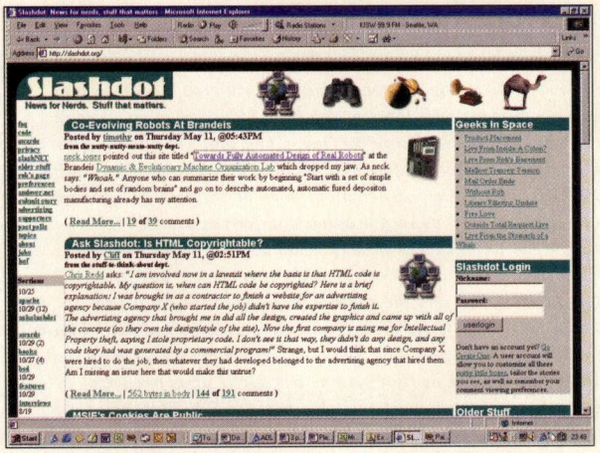
Who's got it right

When your Web site does load your visitors have to be able to see what they're looking for and get to it quickly. Show them what's on the site, tell them why they want to click through and look at it and present it well. And if it's as easy as that, why do so few sites do it well? And just as importantly, how do you get it right yourself? Go away and look at some Web sites. See what they're doing (and how you can do it better). Take a look at the sites you like yourself, even if they're nothing to do with what your site will cover. Think about why you visit them and what it is that you like.

And then spend some time looking around the worst sites you can find. Sites that make you tense and frustrated and ready to throw the computer out of the window. Sites with poor navigation, so you have no idea what's on them or how to find it if it is there. Sites with search fields that let you search the rest of the Web but not the site you're on. Sites where your path through the site means endlessly doubling back to the home page because the navigation doesn't let you go on to the next logical page: take a look at the way www.egg.com insists that you log out of the site and log back in again if you want to look at the details of your credit card and your savings account too. Sites where you have to wait around to download a Java applet that gives you a navigation bar with no more functions than the set of text links at the bottom of the page:



Compaq's Web site has four main sections: here we've reached geographically organised information with more options on the left in case we weren't looking for the street addresses



One, two, three, four navigation bars before we even start to scroll down the page. Unless you know where to look, a busy site like this makes it hard to find any useful information

more bells, whistles and hourglasses than anything really useful. Sites that are divided up into so many frames that your Web browser is full of scroll bars. Sites that have useful information that's poorly written, full of broken links or missing images or written in patronising or jargon-laden terms.

Web principles

We don't spend as much time thinking about things that work well: we just use them and get on what with we wanted to do in the first place. That means it's easier to learn from other people's mistakes than to get it right every time, but there are some basic principles underlying a good Web site. For a start, it needs to be coherent, not just a collection of pages that happen to link to one another. Good-looking pages help, and the site needs to be useful, so people will actually bother to visit it. Everything important should be easy to find: and that includes a phone number for your company and an email address for someone other than the Web master (visitors are more likely to want to ask about a product or a story than to tell you about a broken link or how much they like the purple text). And make sure the emails get answered: there's no point attracting people to your site and then ignoring them!

The key to all of this is to think about your users. Who are the people who are going to come to your Web site and why? What do they want to do and what do you want them to do? Why do you want them to come in the first place? Are you selling products, providing information, promoting your company, showing an online brochure or providing a place for people to build a community? Why will they want to come? Remember, that may not be the same reason you want them there. How will they move through the site? And if the answer to any of those questions is that "we're planning to have a Web site" then you can either stop and find out first, or waste time and money putting up a Web site and then find out (unless you're very lucky).

What do you want?

Once you have some idea of what your site visitors will want, think about what you're going to put on the site and where it's going to come from. Do you already have brochures and pamphlets and other promotional information? What format are they in? How often do they get updated? How are you going to transfer the documents and keep them up-to-date? Who gets to decide what needs to be included on the Web site and when it needs updating? Decide this before you build the site and you're less likely to get caught in internecine office politics over who gets to put their information on the front page of the Web site. Think about the little things too: who's going to spell-check the documents and approve the Web versions? Make sure you have a system that stops announcements going up on the Web site before they are supposed to go public.

Then it's time to start thinking about how to arrange what you're putting on the site: that's the architecture, not the design. It doesn't matter if your site ends up bright pink or pale beige at this point (although good design does matter and by good design we don't mean a copy of Photoshop and a CD-ROM of clip art); what you need to worry about at this point is how users will navigate around your site.

If you were out of the office, could someone find an important document on your desk? Whether you file everything in labelled folders or work on the principle of geological stratification (it's a week old so it'll be under this pile of papers), you arrange things the way that makes sense to you. How about the way you store files on your hard drive? It might be obvious to you, but how about everyone else? Well, that's why many Web sites are hard to navigate.

Finding your way around

There's no one right way to arrange information. If you're including a list of user groups or departments, an alphabetical list might be the obvious way to organise it. Some information belongs in chronological order but that's not always the most useful way to present it: if you're looking for details of the latest lawnmowers you would rather see press releases by topic than wade through six months of titles till you see the one mentioning lawnmowers. (And that's why you should make the text of links informative rather than clever.) If you're looking for weather reports or restaurants, a geographical list makes sense. But almost all of these would work as well, or better, if they were divided up by subject. The tricky thing is

Jargon Buster

Java
An advanced Web programming language.

GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)
This is a file format for saving images so that they can be viewed by a Web browser.

Interface
The part of the software program that you interact with, i.e. the graphical display.

Reading matter

While you're planning a Web site there are two books that you should keep open on your desk.* Information Architecture for the World Wide Web *(by Louis Rosenfeld & Peter Morville, ISBN: 1565922824, Publisher: O'Reilly & Associates) will help you decide what should be on your Web site and how to arrange it, how to research your audience and negotiate with senior management. With sample documents for creating wish lists, plans, site layouts and style lists, you'll have a headstart on planning and documenting your site. And there's plenty of advice on how to think about your site to make it better for your users.* Web Navigation: Designing the User Experience *(by Jennifer Fleming, ISBN: 1565923510, Publisher: O'Reilly & Associates) covers site structure, organisation, layout and the stages you'll need to go through. Case studies on information, community, learning and shopping sites show you what successful sites are doing and why it works and the appendix of tips and tricks is worth the price of admission on its own.

Multimedia on the Web

As a baby will watch a mobile, moving objects on Web pages will grab our attention. This is why animations are important additions to Web sites. The more sophisticated you get, the larger the download before anyone can see it. The simplest option is an animated GIF image that shows one frame after another: you can use it for a rotating logo or a flashing "NEW!" Button and you can animate once or continually. The next step up is Flash animations: Macromedia's vector animation format uses a downloadable plug-in to play back Flash movies which can contain moving images, sound and text. Not only can you click on a Flash graphic as a button, but you can interact with it: roll your cursor over it and the rollover state of the button looks different, giving you more information what you're going to click on. Shockwave movies give you full scale interactivity: this is the online version of Macromedia Director and you can build an entire interface, game or chat system, but again, users need the plug-in and the files can get large. Streaming video clips give you film footage on the page, but the quality has to be low to keep the file size down.

picking the right subjects, which is why you need to know what your users will be looking for and what they'll want to do.

You can divide most things into topics or tasks and it's better not to mix the two. Work out what the topics are going to be and how you classify items into a topic: if you're unsure which category an item goes in, how is the user going to know where to look? Avoid metaphors: they're not always clear and can make life difficult in the long run. There are bound to be features that just won't fit into the metaphor and if you decide to represent the sections of your site as rooms in a house or buildings on a street, what do you do when you need to add a new section or drop an old one?

If you need to divide your site up in multiple ways, because you're going to have two distinctive audiences, you don't need to relegate either to a second page. As long as you position them separately, you should be able to fit them both on the front page.

The underlying structure of your site and how people move around it is about the way you link your sections and subjects together. If it's a hierarchy, don't make it too deep – or too shallow. If you put too many topics in the top level of the hierarchy, you'll have a confusing number of buttons and links on the screen and not much content behind them. Stick with the magic number: most people can cope with about seven things at once, plus or minus two. If you have more than ten options on a screen it's going to be confusing. And don't have too complex a hierarchy with endless sub-levels: if it takes more than three or four clicks to get to the page they want, many people will give up.

Linking up

Keep the number of links on your front screen down to a manageable level. If you've got a logical navigation system, stick with just a few major additional features, such as the top five things people will want to do or the three newest links. Putting a 'What's New' button on your site can be useful to let people know about recent additions - as long as you update it frequently. Nothing makes a site look less impressive than a 'What's New' section that hasn't been updated for six months. How often are you expecting people to come back? If you can't make sure there will be something new most times they visit, don't make a fuss about it. Spinning logos saying "NEW!" will make links and sections stand out, but they can look pretty tacky too, especially if you forget to take them off. Similarly, don't put a 'last updated' timestamp on every page unless the date matters, or you'll be keeping the site up to date on a regular basis. It's more useful to keep a spot on your front page to feature your latest new story or great feature, where everyone will see it straightaway.

It can be tempting to just link pages together as you find a possible link, but while hyperlinks are great for exploring when you're in the mood and you've got the time, a site with only non-linear, non-hierarchical links quickly gets confusing. By all means use hyperlinks between pages as well as your main site organisation – a related link section is always useful for exploring further – but don't make that the only way to get around. Similarly, putting a search on your site is vital, but that can't be the only way to find pages either.

Keeping current

Make your own life easier as well and try to design your site so that index and category pages are automatically updated without you needing to insert links by hand. Use frames or editor features like FrontPage's categories to include information from one page where you need it rather than recreating links in every page.

Don't keep changing your front screen or your topics and structure: not only will any links people have saved break and the search engines lose track of what's on your site, but you'll make it harder to use the site. We build up a mental model of where items are on screen and every time things move around, your users will have to stop and look. Don't think of this as an opportunity to make them look at the banner adverts: any time users have to stop and think what to do next is a chance that they might leave the site altogether instead.

And when you've got all that planned, try it out on a few people. Show them your front page and ask where they would click and why. Think of what people will want to do on your site and follow the path they'll have to take to do that. Stick lots of sticky yellow notes on a board and move them around to see if you've got the most efficient way of getting to important pages. And when you've done all that, you can start thinking about the colours and layout of your pages and get back to building those Flash rollovers, because you'll have a Web site worth building. ■

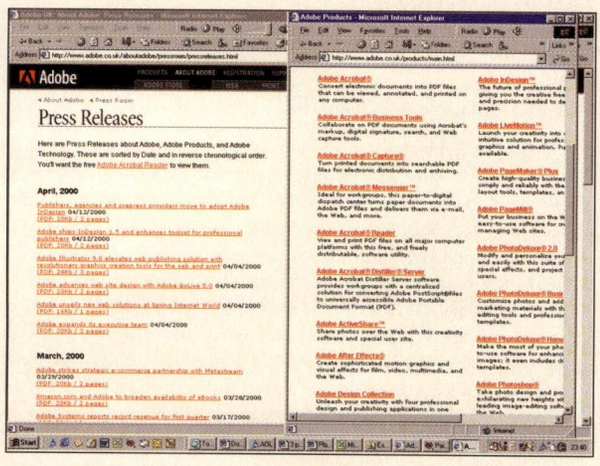
Jargon Buster

Plug-in
A piece of software that enhances the capabilities of your Web browser. Plug-ins can allow your browser to play animations (e.g. Shockwave) or video clips and sound (e.g. RealPlayer).

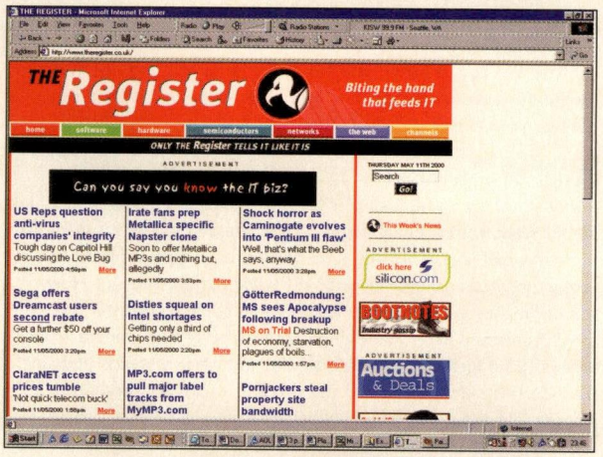
Rollover button
A button that changes its appearance when you interact with it.

Streaming
A technique for transferring data so that it can be processed as a steady and continuous stream.

Web master
A person who maintains a Web site.



Arranging press releases in chronological order is easy for the Web master, but a topic-based index is easier to navigate



News stories make more sense in chronological order but the topic buttons take readers to stories by subject as well

Beginners

Beginners start here. If you're a novice designer and need all the help you can get, the tutorials in this section will help you to build a page in FrontPage Express, add graphics to that page and learn how to publish your work on to the Web. And once you're confident with that you can move on to the intermediate tutorials...

More help for beginners

A reader sent an email recommending Joe Barta's Professional Web Design and HTML Tutorials. It's a good one to start you off on the HTML trail. The process of learning HTML is explained simply and professionally as Barta guides you gently from the basics while telling you everything you need to know about colour and managing graphics on your site. Click on the site map for a handy overview of the tutorials on offer. Get a good start at http://junior.apk.net/~jbarta/

Help with HTML

Need some help with your HTML? Then direct your browser to www.html-help.co.uk/ and you'll find a complete course on Web building, made up of Web-building tutorials that have appeared in this magazine. The course enables you to work through different sections, covering basics, HTML, graphics and more advanced topics. Each tutorial is checked off in your individual course as you progress, and the browser remembers which tutorials you've read so there's no need to read all of them in one go. When you complete a section, the next section is automatically added in to your page, so you can continue. Very neat. ■

Internet Advisor

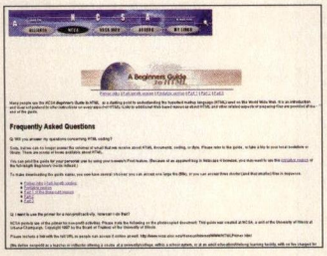
To help you find your way around the Internet, or sister mag, Internet Advisor provides invaluable help and resources for beginners. It Helps you to discover what's available online without spending all your time searching and hitting deadends. For people who are fascinated by the Internet but don't know how to use it effecively, Internet Advisor dispels the mystery and explains everything you need to know in plain english. It costs only £1.99 and is available from your newsagents or by subscription from www.futurenet.co.uk.

Focus on HTML

So, you've decided to make the jump and start coding HTML yourself. After all, it's the best way to learn and understand how the Web works. But where do you start? Raggett on HTML 4 (search for it at Amazon www.amazon.co.uk) is an excellent book, but there are some great guides on the Web that you can use free of charge. Here are some to start you off.

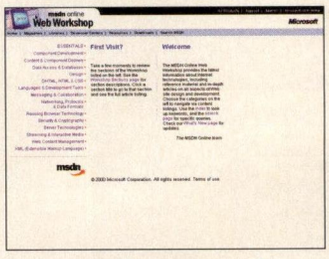
.net's Web Builder

Our sister mag's very own Web Builder is now officially an invaluable resource. If you're a complete beginner, read the four-part Build Your Own Web site to learn how to approach the building of a site and then catch up on past Hands-on HTML tutorials each covering a different design element.
www.netmag.co.uk



Web Developer's Virtual Library (WDVL)

The excellent WDVL takes you step by step through the basics of HTML and beyond. An essential bookmark for any Webmaster because it moves on to more complex issues such as DHTML and JavaScript too.
www.ncsa.uiuc.edu/General/Internet/WWW/HTMLPrimer.html



MSDN Online Web Workshop

Microsoft offers some of the best HTML tutorials anywhere because it introduces you to the code and shows you what the result looks like in your Web browser. have a look here first if you want to grasp the basics of HTML. It's a great site for reference if you're new to Web design.

Webmonkey

Webmonkey eases you gently into HTML and then starts you practising online with its nifty HTML teaching tool. Type in your HTML and let Webmonkey tell you how you did. You'll find that it deals with newcomers gently which is what makes it such a good site.
www.webmonkey.com

In brief

SOFTWARE:
FrontPage Express

PROJECT:
Creating a basic Web page

TIME:
1 hour

Creating your fir

With FrontPage Express you can create your own Web page in one hour

Facing the prospect of building your first Web page may prove a little daunting. It needn't be. FrontPage Express is a straightforward Web page creator which comes free with Internet Explorer 5 – a popular Web browser that you'll find on our cover CD. FrontPage Express is what's known as a "drag-and-drop" or WYSIWYG program. Literally, that means that you drag the elements you want to see on to the page and move them around to suit. You can style and format your text using the same shortcuts and menus used in Microsoft Word. If you are prepared to experiment then you'll find that FrontPage is quite flexible (although it lacks some of the fancier features found in other editors) and that it's a great tool for beginners to Web site building.

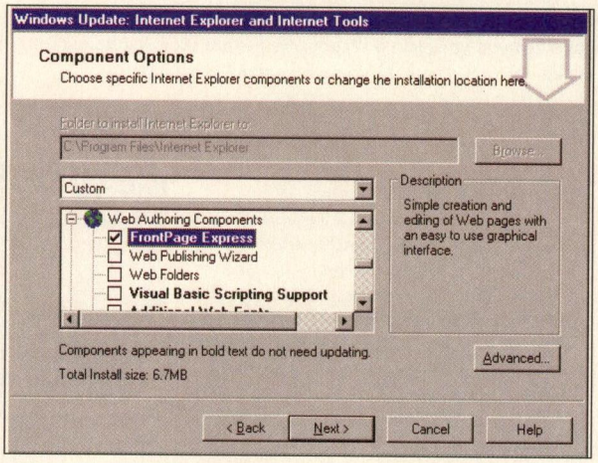
Jargon Buster

Browser
This is the software program you install on your computer to surf the Web. The browser reads Web pages and interprets the commands they include to produce an eye-friendly page on your screen. The two main Web browsers are Microsoft's Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

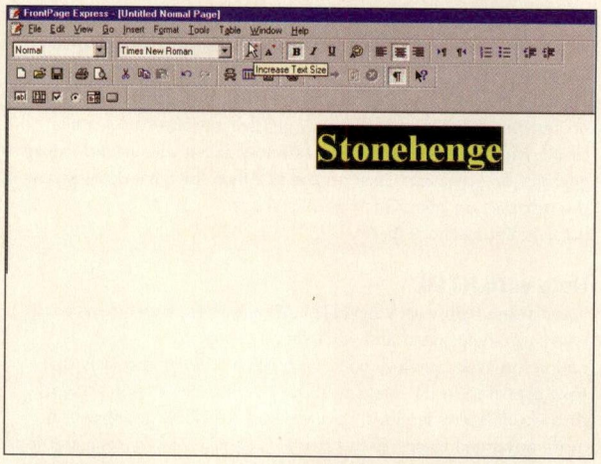
Home page
The term used for the main page of your Web site. The first page that you want to appear on your site should be called either index.htm or default.htm, so that it loads automatically.

Justification
If text is on central justification it is centrally aligned. If you change the text to left justification it will be aligned to the left side of the page.

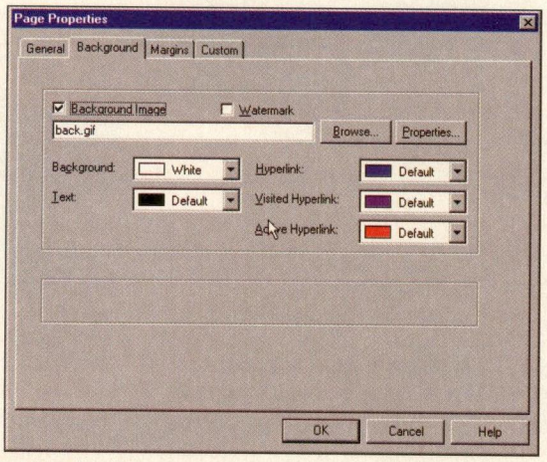
Relative path
Pages and images that are all part of the same Web site only need a relative path: 'page2.htm' rather than http://www.mywebsite.co.uk/page2.htm.


Windows Update: Internet Explorer and Internet Tools
Component Options
Choose specific Internet Explorer components or change the installation location here.
Folder to install Internet Explorer to:
C:\Program Files\Internet Explorer
Browse...
Custom
Description
Simple creation and editing of Web pages with an easy to use graphical interface.
Web Authoring Components
FrontPage Express
Web Publishing Wizard
Web Folders
Visual Basic Scripting Support
Components appearing in bold text do not need updating.
Total Install size: 6.7MB
Advanced...
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

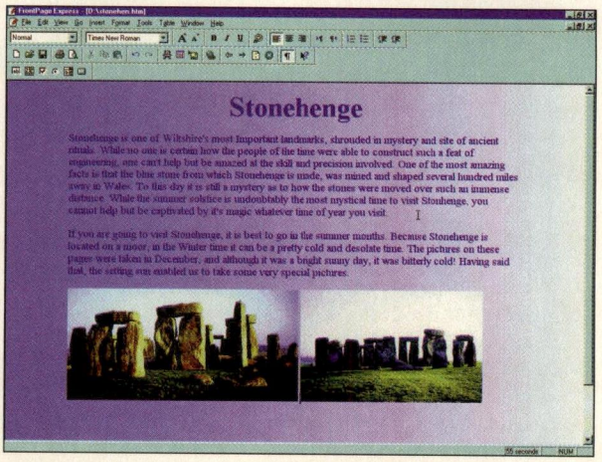
STEP 1 **Install Internet Explorer 5 from the cover CD following the instructions on page 6. In IE5, select the Custom Install option. You will see a list of options. Scroll down until you find FrontPage Express and tick the box next to it. It's not instantly obvious where FrontPage is on the programs menu, but all you need to do is go up to Accessories, Internet Tools and then FrontPage Express.**


FrontPage Express - [Untitled Normal Page]
File Edit View Go Insert Format Tools Table Window Help
Normal
Times New Roman
Increase Text Size
Stonehenge

STEP 2 **When you start up FrontPage Express, you will be presented with a blank page. We decided to create a page about Stonehenge using our own photographs, but first we need a title. Click on the centre justification button, choose a font colour, and type in your title. Highlight it, and use the Increase Text Size button to increase the size of your title.**



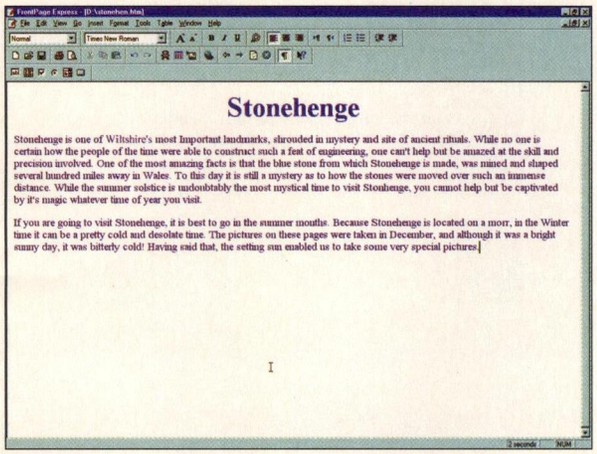
STEP 5 **Now it's time to add some pictures. To add a background image, right-click on your page, select Page Properties, and select an image. Make sure that your images are in the same directory as your Web page, and that you only enter the name of the image (i.e. image.jpg). If you put in c:\Web\image.jpg for example, the image won't appear when you put your page on the Web.**


Stonehenge
Stonehenge is one of Wiltshire's most important landmarks, shrouded in mystery and site of ancient rituals. While no one is certain how the people of the time were able to construct such a feat of engineering, one can't help but be amazed at the skill and precision involved. One of the most amazing facts is that the blue stone from which Stonehenge is made, was mined and shaped several hundred miles away in Wales. To this day it is still a mystery as to how the stones were moved over such an immense distance. While the summer solstice is undoubtably the most mystical time to visit Stonehenge, you cannot help but be captivated by it's magic whatever time of year you visit.
If you are going to visit Stonehenge, it is best to go in the summer months. Because Stonehenge is located on a moor, in the Winter time it can be a pretty cold and desolate time. The pictures on these pages were taken in December, and although it was a bright sunny day, it was bitterly cold! Having said that, the setting sun enabled us to take some very special pictures.

STEP 6 **While a background image might add colour and interest, foreground images are the real key to Web pages. However, don't be tempted to just add images willy-nilly, as this will increase the time it takes to load. To add an image, simply click the Add Image button and use the justification or indents to place them, again taking care to just enter the image name.**

st Web page

Practical Web Pages on the CD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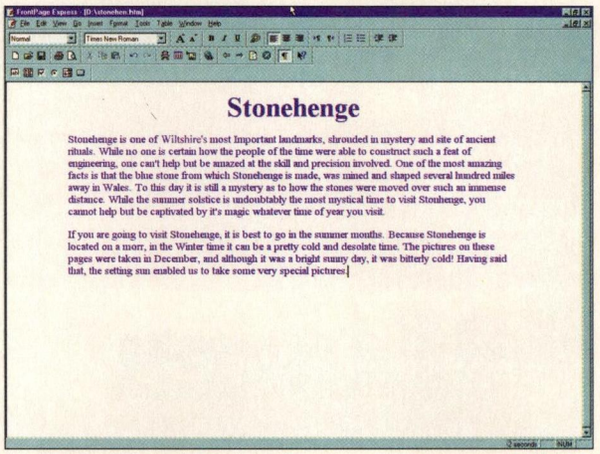
STEP 3 We are still on central justification, so press the Left Justify button and hit return a few times. Now we need to enter an introduction, which needs to be short to hold interest. Unfortunately FrontPage Express doesn't have a spellchecker, so check your spelling carefully! As you would do when writing a letter, make sure you put paragraphs in at the appropriate places to split your text up.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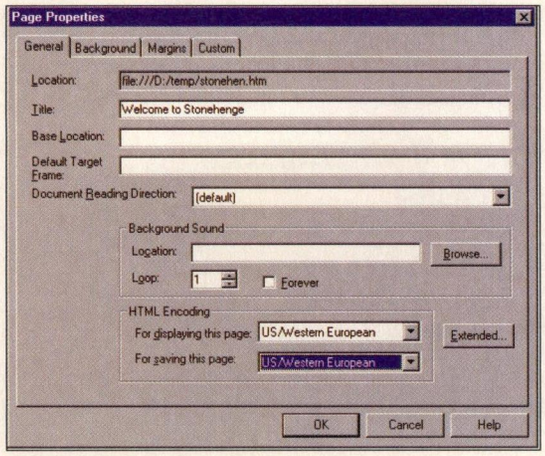
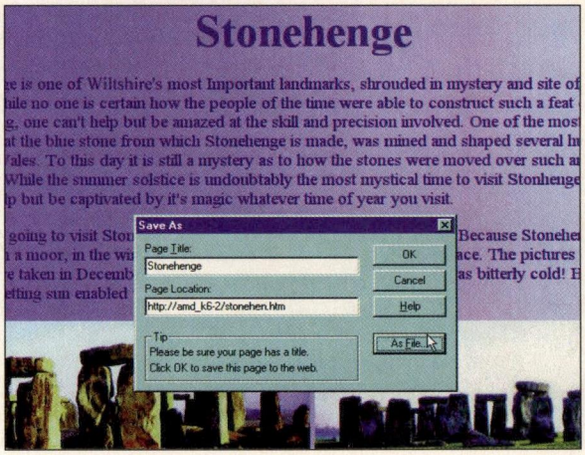
STEP 4 The text should not run straight across to the edge of a Web page, and you should not be afraid to use a fair amount of white space. Reading a solid lump of text which stretches right across the page is hard on the eye, so use your mouse to highlight your text and press the Increase Indent button. Once should be enough, but experiment to see what suits you.



STEP 7 It's good practice to give your Web pages a name, which will be displayed in the top left-hand corner of your browser's window. The name should give your readers an idea of what your page is about. To name your page, right-click on the page and select Page Properties. The second box is where you should enter your page's title. At this stage you should leave all the other settings as they are.



STEP 8 Now you need to save your Web page. When you come to do this, FrontPage Express will try to save it to the Web. As you won't be connected to the Internet permanently, it's better to save it to your hard drive first, so choose the option Save as File, and place it in the same directory as your images so that it is easy to find it again. Voila! Your first Web page! ■

Hints & tips

Keep it short

When you enter the text for your introduction, make sure the text is not too long so that you will hold the interest of your visitors.

Add some images

Having text only on your page is pretty boring, so don't be afraid to add some pictures. Don't overdo it though as this will slow down your Web site.

Name your page

When you name your Web page, choose something obvious that will give a clear indication of what your Web pages are about, such as "steve's homepage", "index" or "menu".

Make good use of colour

One of the best things about using FrontPage Express is that it is easy to use colour for emphasis. To add colour, select your text with the mouse and click the Text Colour button. You can choose from a set of default colours or, if you click on "Define custom colours, you can choose your own shade. Be careful that your text does not disappear into the background; dark blue text on a black background can be difficult to read!

In brief

SOFTWARE:
FrontPage Express

PROJECT:
Making your site look more professional

TIME: 1 hour

Expanding your

Now it's time to make your basic Web page look more professional

Creating a Web page is fine, but the real skill of putting a Web site together is how creatively you develop it. On these pages we walk you through some of the options you could follow up including linking up pages, making tables, organising text on your pages, jumplists and "mailto" addresses. These simple additions are just the tip of the iceberg and will start you off. Don't worry if you reach the end of these pages thinking you want more. We will go into more depth later in the magazine. These pages will help you to understand the versatility of FrontPage Express and show you some of things you can do with it to make the best of your first Web site.

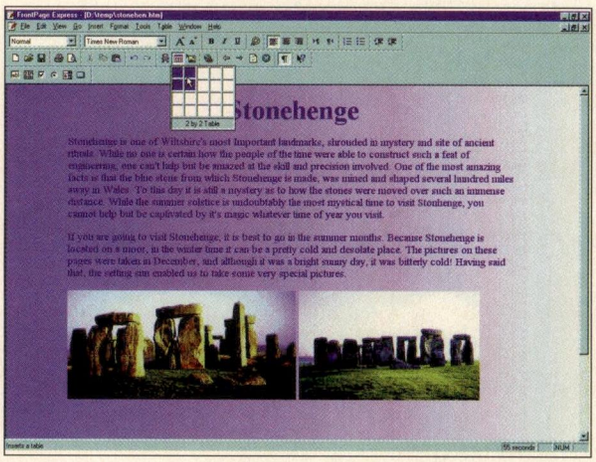
Jargon buster

Hyperlink or link
A hyperlink is a 'hotspot' in a Web page that connects different Web pages, or even areas within the same page. You can tell you are over a hyperlink as your cursor will change to a pointing hand and the text is usually underlined. If you click on a hyperlink you will be taken to another Web page or another area within the same page.

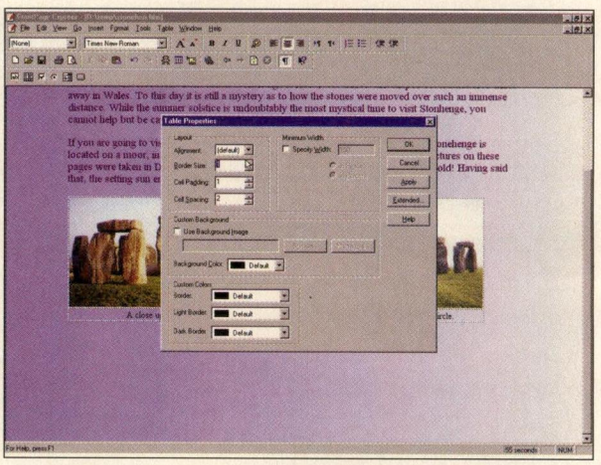
Mouse cursor
This is the flashing line on your computer's screen which shows you what point of the document you are working at. If you type some text into your computer it will be inserted into the document at the point where the cursor is flashing.

Table cell
Tables are divided into different sections, or cells.

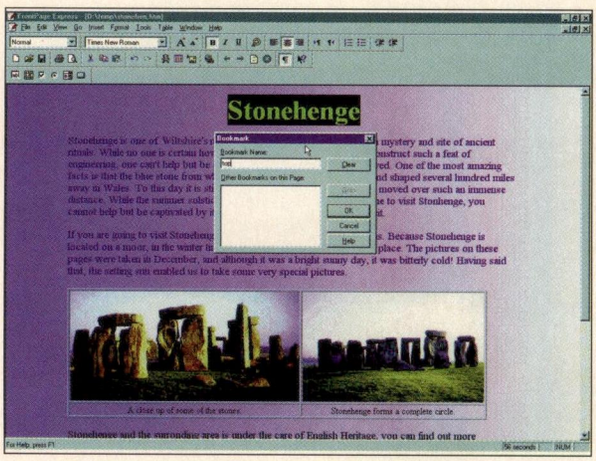
URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
The jargon for Web site address.



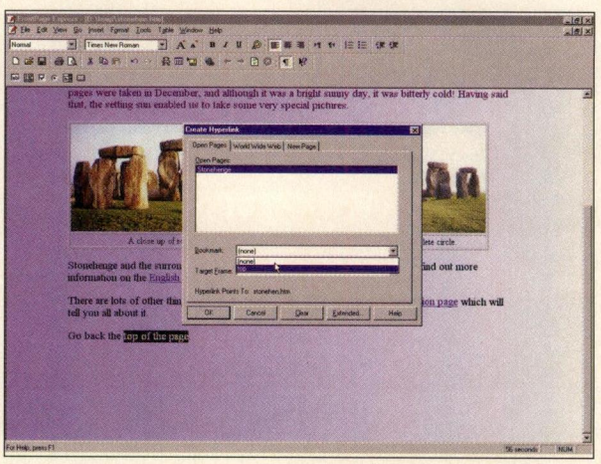
STEP 1 One of the best ways of laying out your Web page is by using tables. To add a table, click Insert Table, and choose the number of rows and columns. To insert your images, click Add Image, use the edit menu to cut the image, then place the mouse cursor in a table cell, and use the Edit, Paste command. Add a caption in the cell below each image.



STEP 2 The text will automatically align to the left of the cell. To centre it under each picture, highlight the text and press the Centre Align button. If you want to add a border, right-click anywhere in the table and choose Table Properties. A new window appears and here you can add a border by increasing the border width to 1, changing the background colour or even specifying a table width.

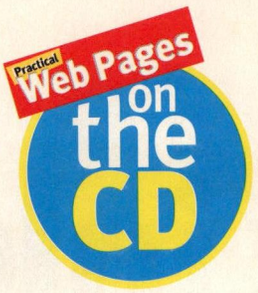


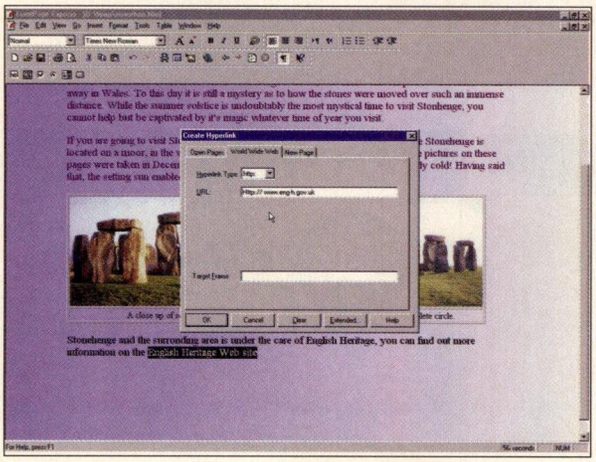
STEP 5 If you have a long page, it's handy to be able to jump to individual sections. To do this, create a bookmark and then create a link to it. For instance, to jump back to the top of the page, turn the title into a bookmark. Highlight the title, go to Edit and select Bookmark. Call the bookmark 'top' and click OK. A dotted line will appear under the link, but won't show in your Web page.



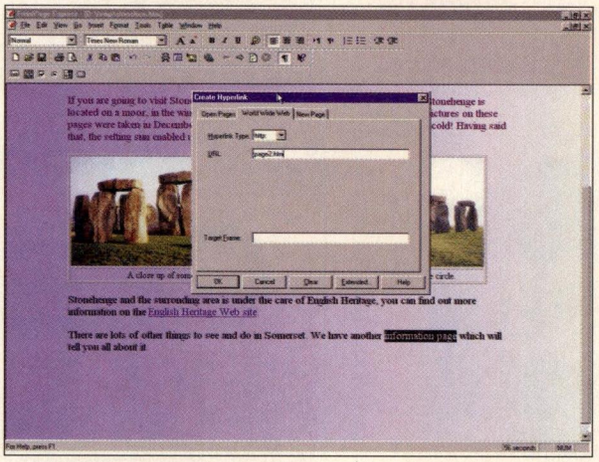
STEP 6 Now we want to create a link to the bookmark. Type in text saying something like: "return to top of page". Highlight the text and click on the Add Link button. Choose the Open Pages tab at the top of the window, and go to the box called Bookmark. Choose the one called 'top' and click OK. Now you'll find that if you click on the link, you'll jump to the top of the page.

Web site

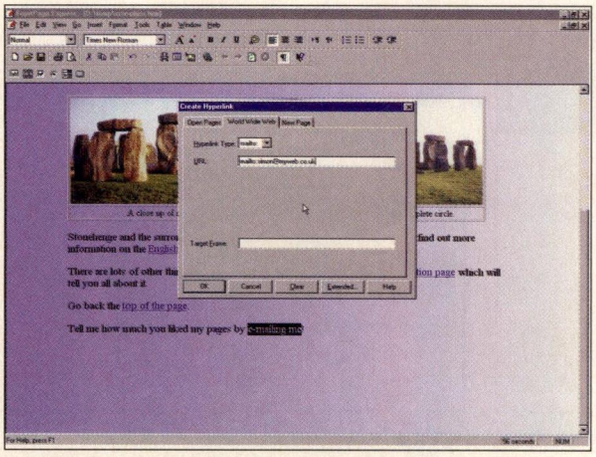




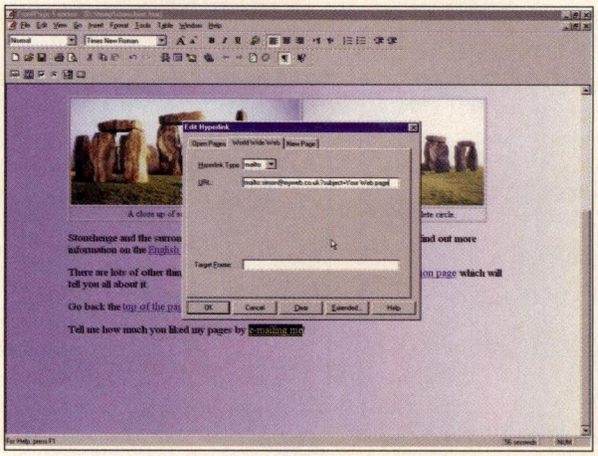
STEP 3 Adding a link is a very simple affair: simply highlight the words you want to use as a link, and click on the Add Link button. You will need to enter the Web site address. Make sure the link is exactly the right format, e.g. http://www.futurenet.co.uk, or the link won't work. If in doubt, simply copy the address from the location bar of your Web browser.



STEP 4 Linking pages within your own Web site is easier. As the new page will be on the same site and directory, you only need to enter the name of the page you are linking to. Highlight the text you want to use as a link, click on Add Link, but this time in the URL box, delete the "http://" part and type in the name of your new page: page2.htm for example.



STEP 7 Now that we have created our Web pages, we want our visitors to be able to tell us how impressed they were by them. The simplest way of doing this is via email. So we need to create an email link. Add some text for example, "email me", and again, highlight it and choose the Add Link button. Under link type choose "mailto" and type your email address in the URL box.



STEP 8 Now everyone can email you, but wouldn't it be good to know instantly which emails came from visitors to your site? Highlight your email link and click on the Add Link button, and click at the end of your email address. Now add, without any spaces "?subject=Your Web page". Now emails arriving from your site visitors will have the subject line 'Your Web page' – and that's pretty handy! ■

Hints & tips

Styling text

Using FrontPage Express is similar to using a word processor such as Microsoft Word or WordPad. There are two ways of styling text: you can either highlight the text and use the style buttons, or you can use short-cut keys. The short-cut keys are the same as for any Windows application, so CTRL + b will put the text in bold, CTRL + i will italicise text, and CTRL + u will underline text. However, underlining is not recommended in Web pages as it can be confused with a hyperlink.

Hints & tips

Break up the text

If you want to put a lot of information on your page but you don't want it to read as a single block of text, there are a number of ways of breaking it up. Adding paragraphs is the most obvious way, but what if you want the text to be separated in a more obvious manner? This is where you can use a horizontal line. To add one, simply go to the insert menus and choose Horizontal Line. Right-click on the line to edit its properties, such as colour and width.

Jargon Buster

Browser
The software you install on your computer to access the Web. The browser reads Web pages and interprets the commands to produce an eye-friendly page on your screen. The two main browsers are Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator.

Clip art
Free images and graphics that you can download from the Internet.

Linking Web gra

In brief

SOFTWARE: *FrontPage Express*

PROJECT: *Linking Web graphics*

TIME: 2 HOURS

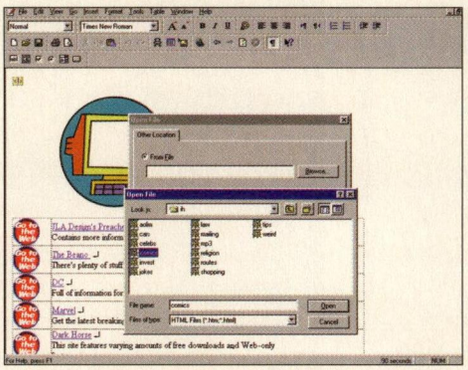
Now you've got your basic Web page, it's time to make it look more professional. It's easy with FrontPage Express

Okay, now you've set up your Web page. It's got text, it's got an image or two and a handy link to that great Web site you found last week. Fantastic. There's only one problem: text links are all well and good, but they're not very pretty, are they? A few interactive buttons would really spice up your Web page, so now we'll show you how to create them to give your site a more professional look.

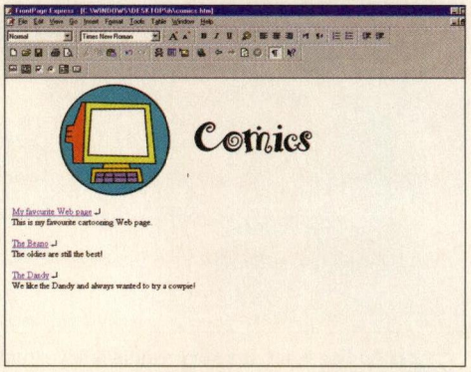
We'll also show you how to link these buttons to other Web sites and make links that open visitors' email programs so that they can send you emails.

We're going to continue using FrontPage Express for this, which is part of the full installation of Internet Explorer 5, which you'll find on our cover CD-ROM. To find out how to install software from the cover CD, turn to page 6.

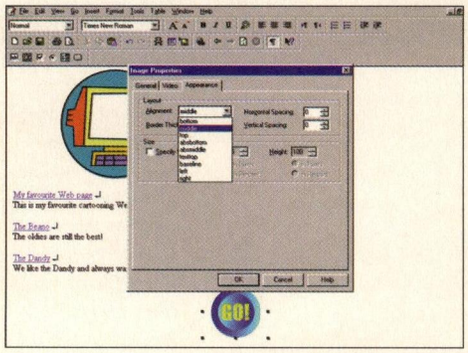
STEP 1 *First, decide what sort of button you are going to use. You could browse the selection on our CD, download one from Xoom (www.xoom.cm/clips/website) or follow our Fireworks tutorials on pages 46–51. When you've chosen your button, move it to the same folder that contains the Web page you'd like to insert it into.*



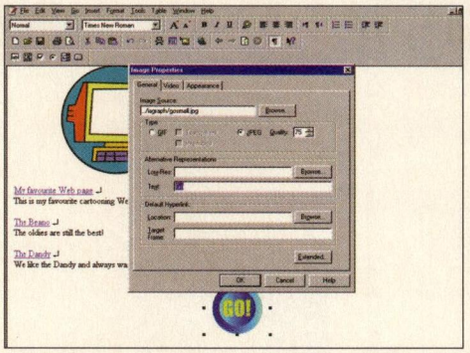
STEP 2 *Open FrontPage Express from the Windows Start Menu. Once it has opened, select File and New and use the Browse function to locate your Web page on your hard drive. When you've found the page you are looking for, double-click it with your mouse and it will appear in the editing window.*


Comics
My favourite Web page
This is my favourite cartooning Web page.
The Beano
The oldies are still the best!
The Dandy
We like the Dandy and always wanted to try a cowpie!

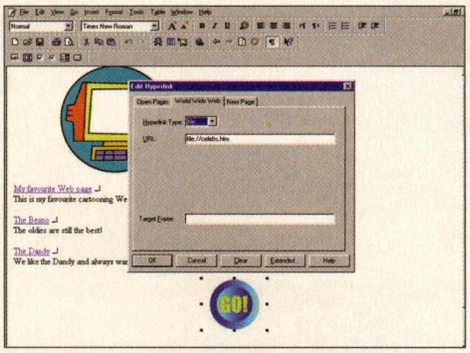
STEP 3 *Above we have shown a page of basic text links, which we've put together for this tutorial. This is only a small part of a larger Web site, and we need to create a link to another page. What we'll do here is create a button beneath the text, which links to the other page.*



STEP 7 *The Justify tool will do the job, but for more accurate and flexible placement of your images, try the Image Properties menu. To activate the menu, right-click your graphic and select it from the list which appears. In the Appearance tab, change the alignment to 'middle' and click OK.*



STEP 8 *People with older machines might not have the patience to download the image. To tell them that this area of the Web page is a link, go back into the Image Properties menu and type some text about the button into the Alternative Representations text box. This text will appear in the space while the graphic is loading.*



STEP 9 *To link your graphic to another page, select the graphic and click the Link icon at the top of the page (it looks like a globe with a figure of eight in front of it). Since we want to link to one of our files, select File from the drop-down menu. Add the name of the Web page you'd like to link to (e.g. file://celebs.htm).*

phics

You'll also need a button, of course, and there are stacks of Web sites on the Web where you'll find free graphics that you can use on your Web pages. Xoom's Web site (www.xoom.com/clips/website) for example, carries a selection of photographs, animated graphics and, most importantly, buttons. You could also try www.free-clip-images.com and www.coolarchive.com. We've also got a wide selection of clip art and graphics on our cover CD-Rom – a massive 5,000 in fact.

But, what if you don't want to use other people's work and you'd like to create a button or graphic with an individual style of your own? Then turn to pages 46–51 where we show you how to create buttons, graphics and rollovers in our step-by-step guide to Fireworks.

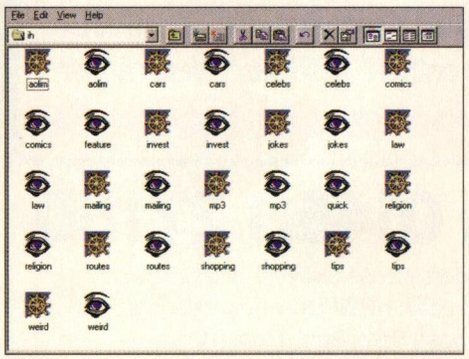
Practical Web Pages on the CD

Jargon Buster

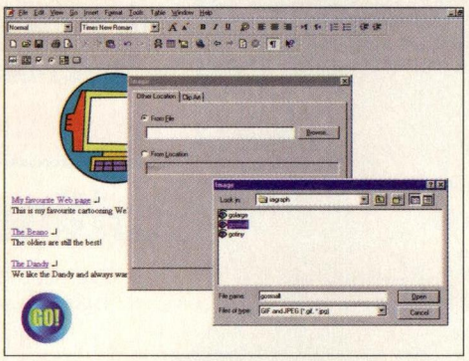
Download
When you download an image from the Internet, you transfer it from a computer on the Internet to your computer at home.

URL (Uniform Resource Locator)
This is the jargon term for Web site address.

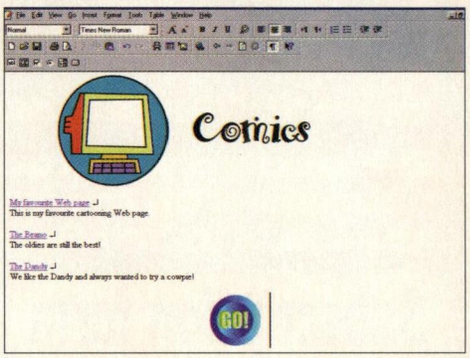
Web master
A person who maintains the content of a Web site.



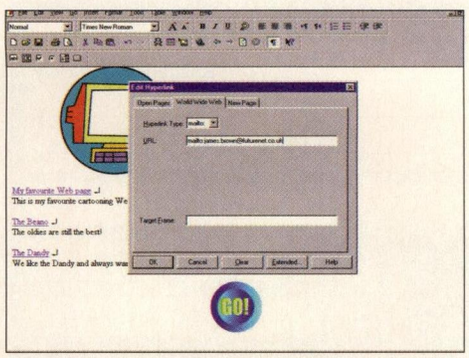
STEP 4 *One of the disadvantages of using a visual Web page creation software program like FrontPage Express is that because it is so easy to create links, you're not encouraged to think about the structure of your Web site. To make our links simple, we've put all our images and pages into one folder.*



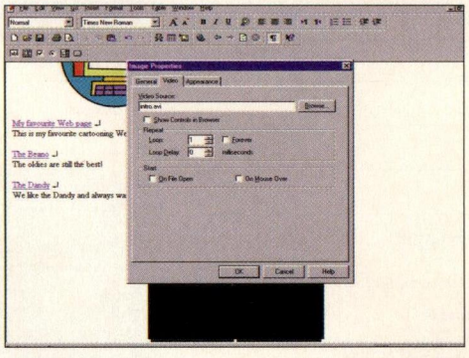
STEP 5 *Now let's add the button to the Web page. Click the line on which you'd like the button to appear in your Web page. Now, click the Image tool (it's the yellow icon with a picture of a mountain on it) and use the Browse button to find the image that you would like to use.*



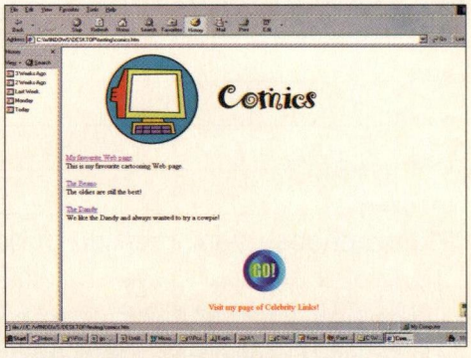
STEP 6 *Click OK and you'll see that your image now appears on your Web page. A quick way to centre the button on the page is to select it and then click the Center Justify tool. You'll find it in the Text toolbar, it's a series of horizontal lines which are centered down the middle.*



STEP 10 *You're not just confined to links to your own pages. The drop-down menu allows you to create links to other Web sites (http:), email addresses (mailto:), FTP files (ftp:) and Newsgroups (news:). Simply select the option from the drop-down menu and add the Web site address to the URL line.*



STEP 11 *More adventurous Web masters might want to include small video clips on their page. Use the video tab of the Image Properties menu to replace your graphic with an AVI file. Remember that video is large, and subsequently slow to download so make sure that the video file is as small as possible.*



STEP 12 *To see what your finished Web page looks like, open it in your browser. Now that you've learnt the basic principle of linking with images, try experimenting with some of the other options in the Image Properties, which allow you to do other things, like put borders around images.* ■

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What is HTML?

Hidden in the murky depths of us all is a programmer waiting to get out. Starting with a basic Web page, let's start by getting to grips with HTML

We've talked about FrontPage Express and hopefully by now, you're well on your way to understanding how a Web site is put together. Have you taken a sneaky preview of the source code? If not, take five minutes to have a look. Go the View menu at the top of your browser and select View Page Source. It might look like jargon, but It's the code used on every Web page and is called HTML which stands for Hyper Text Markup Language. Even if you use a piece of software such as FrontPage Express, it still works in HTML. The software just places a user-friendly graphical interface over the top so that you don't see what's happening under the bonnet. And while you can use FrontPage Express or another WYSIWYG package to create your Web site, it still helps if you have an understanding of basic HTML. It's not essential but occasionally the WYSIWYG packages will generate code that conflicts with some browsers and causes the page to crash or not to load properly. If you understand a little of how the code works, you can strip out the extra code and put this right. You'll find that it's quite easy to come to grips with and that you don't need to be a hot-shot programmer to master it. HTML works by 'marking up' the text that you want to display on your Web site. All of the information that tells the page what to do sits between two pointed brackets <>, a set to start the command at the beginning of the instruction and a set to close the command after the copy or image that's affected. The only difference between the start command and the close one is that the close command carries a </>.

<B>The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog</B>

This command tells the page that the text between the two sets of brackets should show as "bold" text.

Have another look at the source code and you'll start to see pairs of brackets appearing on the page. Starts to demystify things, doesn't it? Don't worry if you can't come to grips with HTML coding at first, by the time you've worked you way through all the tutorials, tips and advice in *Practical Web Pages* you'll feel so confident about building Web sites that HTML will start to become second nature. ■

Hints & tips

As you can see, HTML coding is straightforward, just don't forget to close off a command after you have started it – this is the most common mistake people make. When there are a number of commands on a single page, it's extremely easy to forget to do this.

Jargon Buster

WYSIWYG
This abbreviation is bandied about quite readily in Internet circles. It means 'What you see is what you get' and is the perfect definition for software programs that take all the thinking, manual coding and hard work out of Web design.

Commands

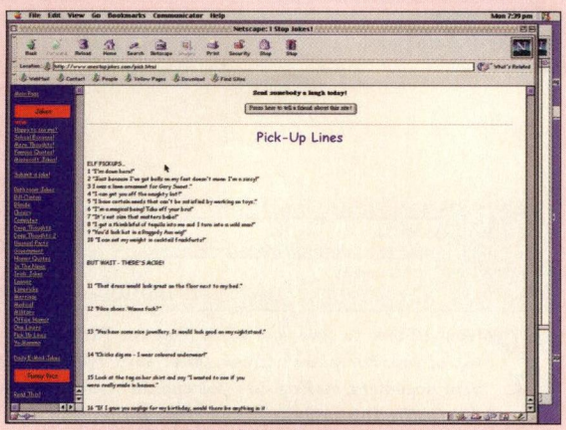
On the whole, commands are obvious. You can probably guess what's needed. But in case you can't ,here's an overview of some of the more common ones.

B** = **bold text
Strong** = **bold text
I** = **Italic text
P** = **paragraph break

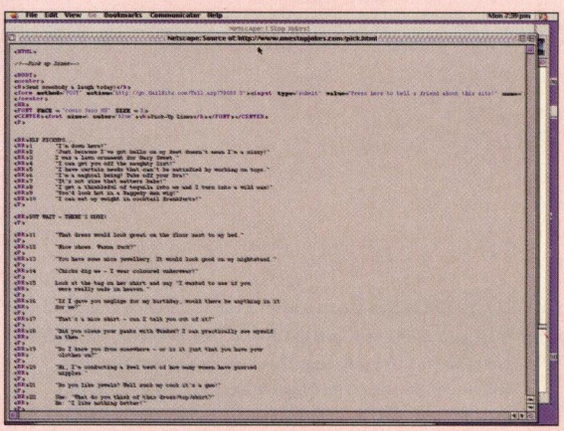
Two other commands that you'll commonly see are:
****

Placing a Web site address between the quote marks and text between the two brackets creates a link to another page. The text between the brackets will be shown on your page.

Yahoo.com
and
<img src="">
This is the code that's used if you want to insert a picture on the page. You have to put the picture location between the quote marks. Notice that it doesn't have a closing bracket.



The raw code can look confusing, but if you look at the designed version of the page, you'll see...



...that it all becomes clear

Learn the basics

How to create a simple Web site using nothing more than a text editor

In brief

SOFTWARE: *Notepad*

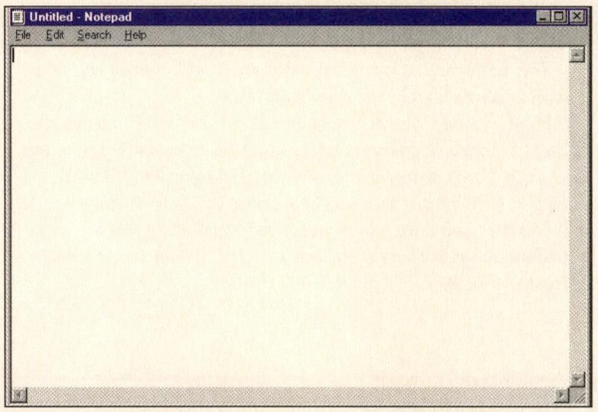
PROJECT: *Creating a very simple Web page*

TIME: 20 mins

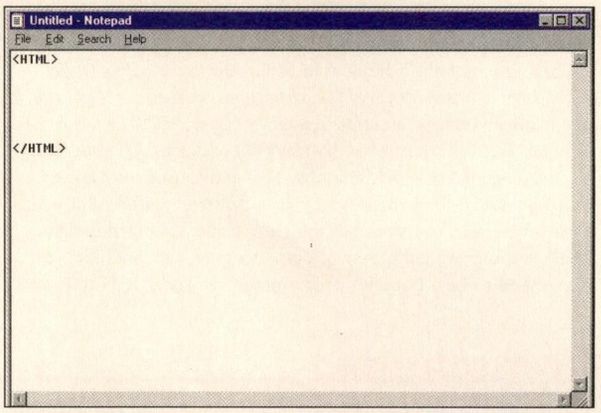
There are so many 'drag-and-drop' (or 'WYSIWYG') software programs now available for building Web pages, it's easy to forget that the building blocks of all Web pages are still HTML 'tags' and code.

If you want to learn how to build really great Web pages, then it's no use just mastering one piece of authoring software and hoping that will be enough. There will be times when you have to adjust pages by tackling the underlying code, so you'll have to learn at least a smattering of HTML code. This might sound a little daunting, but HTML is a very easy language to pick up, and uses logical commands.

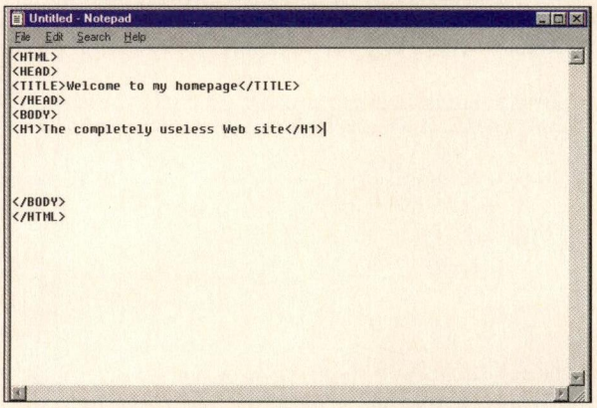
By following the simple instructions below you will be able to create your first simple HTML document. Once you have picked up the basics, it will be no time before you become more advanced – especially with the help of our simple guides, which will show you how to add new features in future issues of *Practical Web Pages*.



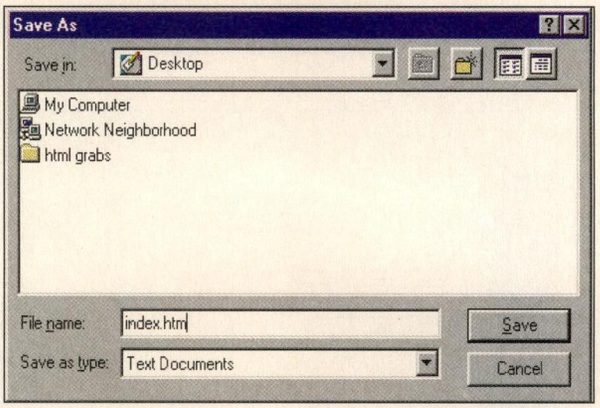
STEP 1 *Open Notepad on your PC from the Start menu. Go to Start, then Run. Type the word "Notepad" into the Open box and click OK. You'll now see a white window open on your screen. Notepad is a software program which is similar to a very basic word processor, which is fine as we're not going to be doing any heavy duty programming – we're just going to mark up a small amount of text so that it can be displayed as a Web page.*



STEP 2 *HTML documents always start with this tag: <HTML> and end with: </HTML>. So, to get started with your Web page, the first thing you need to type into your text editor is: <HTML>. Now press the return key a few times to leave some blank lines in the text document and then type the end tag: </HTML>. You'll be entering the rest of your HTML tags and your text in the blank lines between the <HTML> and </HTML> tags.*



STEP 5 *Now you can enter anything you like in those blank lines in-between the body tags. Let's start with a headline, which will be set at its biggest size: H1. First type the opening tag: <H1> and then enter some text straight after it. Remember to include your closing header tag at the end: </H1>. You should now have something like: <H1>My homepage</H1> under the <BODY> tag. If you would like a smaller headline, increase the number after the H, e.g <H2>, <H3> and so on.*



STEP 6 *Now it's time to save your work. From the File menu at the top of your computer's screen, select Save and then name your document, making sure you end the name with the .htm suffix. This suffix tells your Web browser that it's looking at an HTML document when you load it in Step 7. For the first page of a Web site, index.htm is the usual convention. To make it easy to find the file later, save it directly onto your computer's desktop.*

Hints & tips

Check the coding

If something appears to be wrong, check your coding. It is important that you use the brackets (< and >) and slashes (/) correctly. The tiniest mistake can ruin the whole page.

Fine-tuning

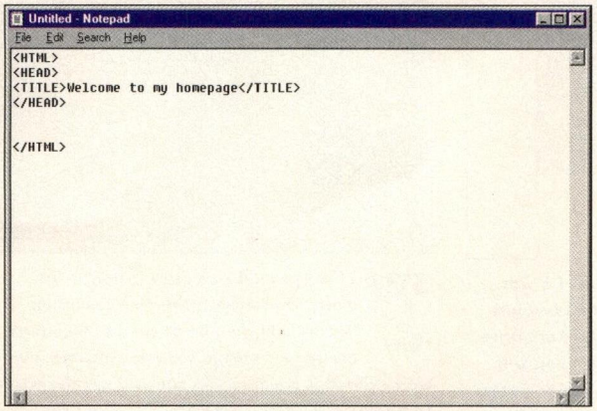
HTML can come in handy even if you use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor such as FrontPage Express or Netscape Composer. With a little HTML knowledge you can fine-tune Web sites made with these packages with more flexibility.

# of HTML

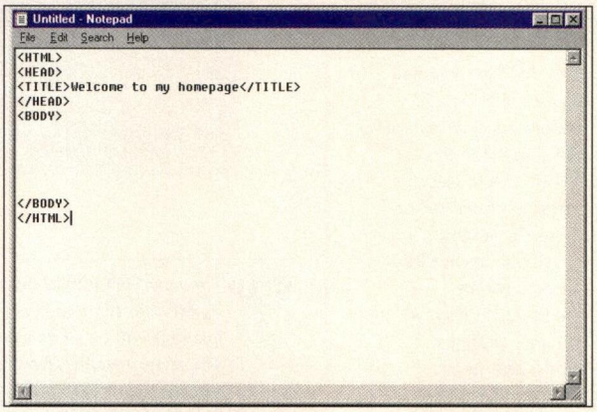
How to write in code

This is all the HTML you need to enter into your text editor:

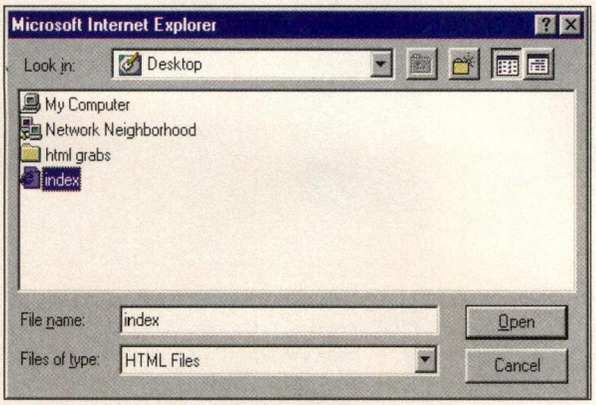
```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Welcome to my homepage</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<H1>My homepage</H1>
</BODY>
</HTML>
```



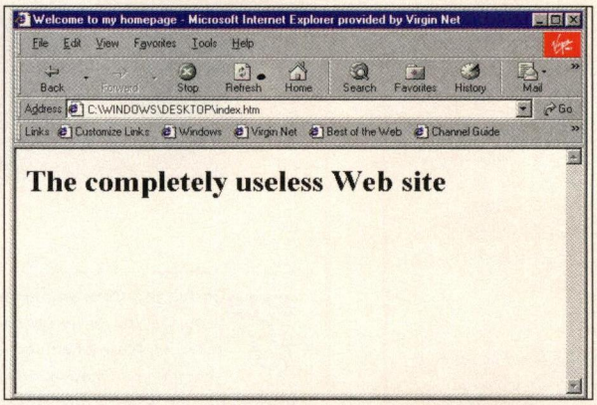
STEP 3 *Now you need to write the header information. This will be the text that is displayed in a browser's title window when a visitor views your Web page. Search engines use this information too, so it is important if you want to attract visitors to your site. Under the <HTML> tag type <HEAD> and hit return. Then type <TITLE>Welcome to my homepage</TITLE> on the next line. Hit return again and type </HEAD> to signify that you're ending the header information.*



STEP 4 *Next comes the body of your Web page. This area starts with – you guessed it – <BODY> and ends with a </BODY> tag right before the final closing </HTML> tag. So, under the </HEAD> tag, enter a <BODY> tag, and above the </HTML> tag, enter a tag like so: </BODY>. Again, make a few blank lines in the middle of the tags so that you've got enough space to type your text for the 'body' of the page and your code will be legible when you return to view it later.*



STEP 7 *To see how your work will appear on the Internet and without the HTML code, open your browser, and select Open from the File menu. Either Netscape or Internet Explorer will be fine, and you don't even need to be connected to the Internet – you'll be viewing the page that is stored on your hard drive. Find the index.htm file in your Open menu and then click Open. If you can't see the file, click the Browse button and find the file on your desktop.*


Welcome to my homepage - Microsoft Internet Explorer provided by Virgin Net
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Mail
Address C:\WINDOWS\DESKTOP\index.htm
Links Customize Links Windows Virgin Net Best of the Web Channel Guide
The completely useless Web site

STEP 8 *And here is your first HTML creation! Admittedly, it may not look much at this stage, but now you have learnt the basics, you can always go back into the document and experiment by adding colours, links to other Web sites, pictures, and more. All you need to know are the relevant HTML tags. Even better, the whole thing takes literally just a few minutes to produce. We'll show you how to change the colours and add pictures using HTML in future issues.* ■

In brief

SOFTWARE: *IE5 Web publishing*

PROJECT: *Publishing your Web site*

TIME: 40 mins

Publishing your

So, you've got your own Web site. Well, good for you. But don't leave it sitting there all alone on your PC. Put it on the Web for the world to see

Microsoft's Web publishing features help you upload your site to your Web space so that browsers around the world can access them. Microsoft updated these features with the release of Internet Explorer 5, but unfortunately provided little help on how to use them. That's where we step in, with this easy-to-follow guide.

The first thing you need to do is get yourself some Web space. Most of the free ISPs include free Web space with each account, so chances are you already have some unused space. For this tutorial, we set up an account with NetDirect Online at www.ndo.co.uk. A small piece of set-up software guides you through the signup and within minutes a new account, together with free Web space, is yours. With this or any new account, you may need to wait up to an hour for the DNS settings (or domain name settings), which control the way the subdomain (your account name) works. In other words, it takes about an hour for the system to prepare www.yoursubdomain.ndo.co.uk so that anyone who types that address into their browser will get sent to your Web space. Yoursubdomain is the username you selected for your account.

Now let's look at how to upload your Web site using IE5's most useful Web publishing feature: Web Publishing Wizard 1.6.

Choosing an ISP

Free for all?

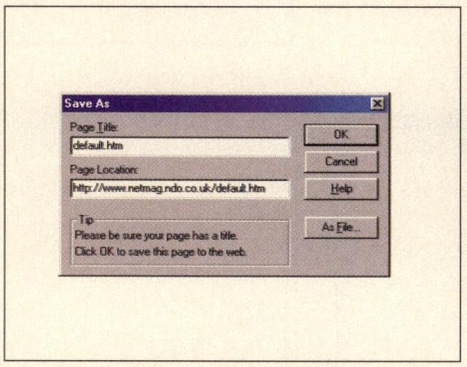
There is no doubt that the appearance of free Internet access last year was a great development in the world of the Net. Nowadays we have free calls as well. Many people are tempted to go straight for a free ISP, for obvious financial reasons, but such a company might not offer the best service and support. If in doubt, check out a free ISP first, you've got nothing to lose.

Special requirements

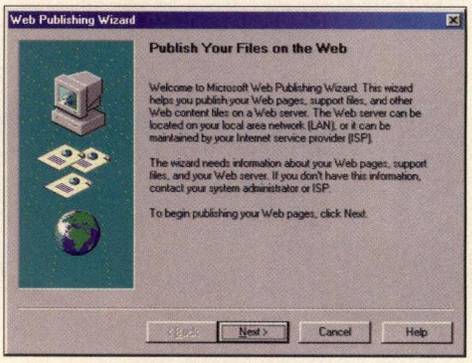
You may find that you want an ISP that is more specific to your needs. For instance, you might want to have a number of different email addresses, each for a different purpose. Or you might want more Web space because you have a large Web site to put up on the Internet.

All of these ISPs offer unlimited Free Web space with their contract. WH Smith, Easynet, Free-Online, Madasafish, Netkonect and Zen Internet Ltd.

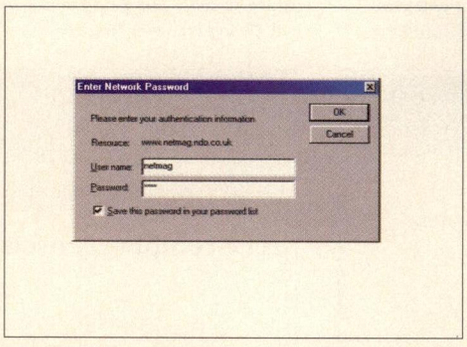
Uploading your site using Web Publishing



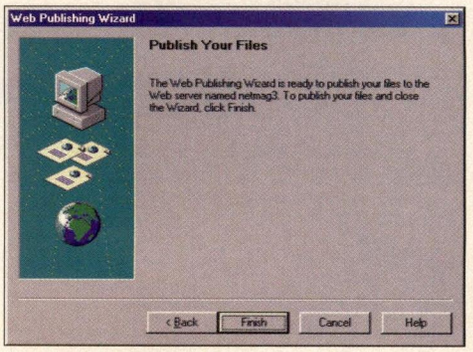
STEP 1 *The new Web Publishing Wizard 1.6 was updated in IE5 and if you did a complete install it will be waiting on your hard drive. There are several ways in which you will come across it. If you're using FrontPage Express to create your page (IE5's Web page editor), you'll see this dialogue when you click on Save. Enter the filename and URL of the page. As we're using NDO, the URL we have is www.netmag.ndo.co.uk. Yours will have a different subdomain.*


Web Publishing Wizard
Publish Your Files on the Web
Welcome to Microsoft Web Publishing Wizard. This wizard helps you publish your Web pages, support files, and other Web content files on a Web server. The Web server can be located on your local area network (LAN), or it can be maintained by your Internet service provider (ISP).
The wizard needs information about your Web pages, support files, and your Web server. If you don't have this information, contact your system administrator or ISP.
To begin publishing your Web pages, click Next.
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

STEP 2 *When you click on Save from the last dialogue in Step 1, the Web Publishing Wizard will then be opened. If you don't use the FrontPage Express software, don't worry about it because you can still use the Wizard to publish your Web pages. You can open the Wizard by going to the Start menu, selecting Accessories, then Internet Tools and then Web Publishing Wizard. Both of these routes will take you to the same dialogue box.*



STEP 6 *So far, the steps you have taken haven't required you to be connected to the Internet. Now when you click on Next, though, your modem will need to connect to the Internet. When it has connected and managed to contact your Web space provider, a new dialogue will ask for your username and password. If you're using the Web space from an Internet Service Provider, these will be the same as the ones you use to connect to the Internet. Check that all the details the Web Publishing Wizard needs have been entered.*


Web Publishing Wizard
Publish Your Files
The Web Publishing Wizard is ready to publish your files to the Web server named netmag3. To publish your files and close the Wizard, click Finish.
< Back
Finish
Cancel
Help

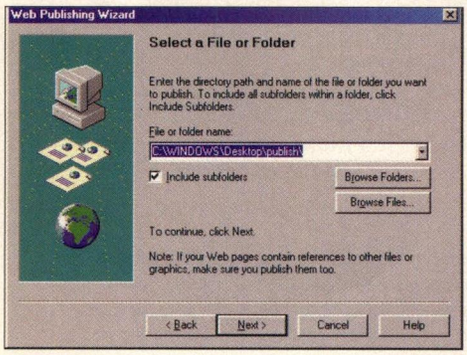
STEP 7 *When your details have been accepted as correct, click on Finish and the Wizard will copy the files to your Web space. You'll see a Posting Files dialogue with a progress indicator as the files transfer (it looks like a standard Windows Copy Progress dialogue), and you may be asked to confirm if dependent files, such as images linked in a page, should be posted too. If you haven't arrived at this dialogue screen, there's a problem and the next two steps will help you solve it – otherwise jump to Step 10.*

Web site

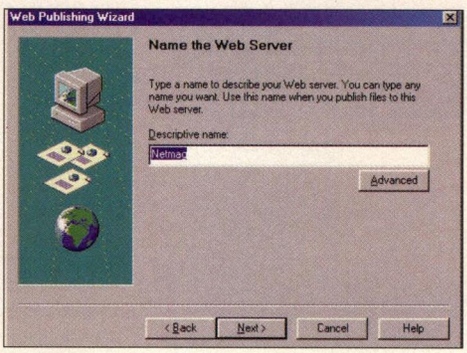
Practical Web Pages on the CD

Looking for an ISP

So, you've decided that you just have to get online. Quite right, too, but which service provider should you sign up with?
There isn't an ISP that we can describe as 'The best' as each one offers slightly different facilities and services and different customers want different things. Some people just want to send emails to friends or relatives around the world, while others want to get their own family Web site up and running with minimum hassle. And others will want to put their own business online. Whatever your needs, make sure you contact the provider before you commit yourself as details are subject to change.


Web Publishing Wizard
Select a File or Folder
Enter the directory path and name of the file or folder you want to publish. To include all subfolders within a folder, click Include Subfolders.
File or folder name:
C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\publish\
Include subfolders
Browse Folders...
Browse Files...
To continue, click Next.
Note: If your Web pages contain references to other files or graphics, make sure you publish them too.
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

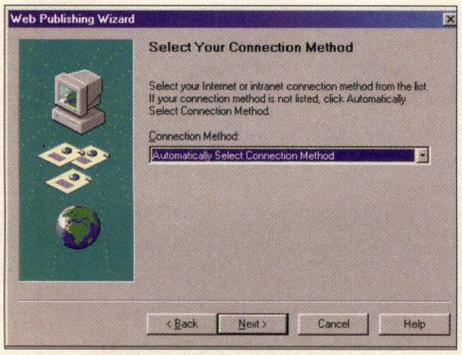
STEP 3 *Now click Next to set up the publishing service. You can choose specific files from the Browse Files button or choose a folder, with subfolders if you prefer. All of the contents of the folder will be uploaded to the Internet, but the main folder itself won't be copied. If you are using FrontPage Express, then you can skip this dialogue because you have already decided which files to publish by virtue of the Save As dialogue box in the main program.*


Web Publishing Wizard
Name the Web Server
Type a name to describe your Web server. You can type any name you want. Use this name when you publish files to this Web server.
Descriptive name:
Netmag
Advanced
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

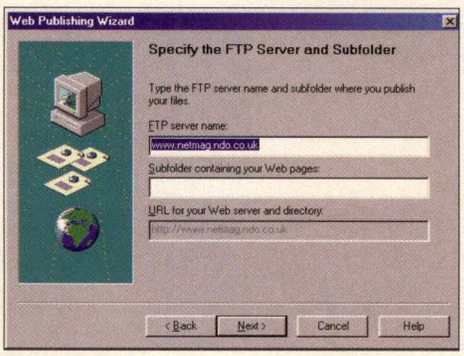
STEP 4 *The next dialogue asks you to enter a name for the connection. Simply type in a descriptive name that you will be able to recognise at a later date. It is important to be able to recognise the name you have chosen because you may end up using the Web space of more than one Internet Service Provider. With a more descriptive name you will be able to remember which server you want to upload to.*

Web Publishing Wizard
Specify the URL and Directory
Type the URL or Internet address you use to access your personal Web pages (for example, http://www.microsoft.com/myname). Your system administrator or service provider supplies this address.
URL or Internet address:
http://www.netmag.ndo.co.uk
Type the local directory on your computer that will correspond to the URL entered above.
Local directory:
C:\WINDOWS\Desktop\publish\
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

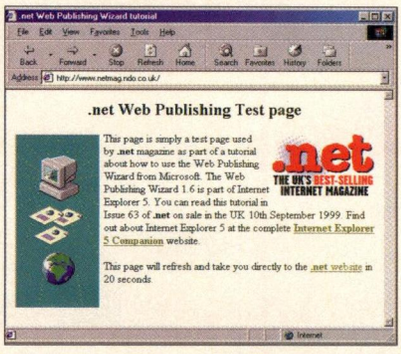
STEP 5 *Now type in the Web address of your Web space. This will depend on your account and will be the same Web address that you typed in during Step 1, if you are using FrontPage Express (our Web address was www.netmag.ndo.co.uk). As a general guide, your subdomain name should be the same as your dial-up username – www.yoursubdomain .yourserviceprovicer.co.uk, as in www.netmag.ndo.co.uk.*


Web Publishing Wizard
Select Your Connection Method
Select your Internet or intranet connection method from the list. If your connection method is not listed, click Automatically Select Connection Method.
Connection Method:
Automatically Select Connection Method
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

STEP 8 *If you didn't get a request for your username and password (as in Step 6) or if it was rejected, even though you know them to be correct, you'll get this dialogue (you can also get here by pressing the Advanced button back in Step 4). It may be that only your account and not the Web space has been set up – even though it's automatic, it does take a while. If that's not the problem, you need to select a method for uploading. Try Automatic but it will most likely fail if you've already reached this stage.*


Web Publishing Wizard
Specify the FTP Server and Subfolder
Type the FTP server name and subfolder where you publish your files.
FTP server name:
www.netmag.ndo.co.uk
Subfolder containing your Web pages:
URL for your Web server and directory:
http://www.netmag.ndo.co.uk/
< Back
Next >
Cancel
Help

STEP 9 *You should be able to find the access method needed on the support pages of your Web space provider, but it's likely to be FTP. You'll need the FTP address of where to upload the files and any subdirectories you need to upload to. For NDO, this is easy and remains a www address, but for many it will be ftp.userpages .serviceprovider.co.uk, possibly with a subfolder of www. For example, Freeserve simply uses an FTP address of: uploads.webspace.freeserve.net with the user's username and password. Click on Next.*


.net Web Publishing Wizard tutorial
File Edit View Favorites Tools Help
Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites History Folders
Address http://www.netmag.ndo.co.uk/
.net Web Publishing Test page
This page is simply a test page used by .net magazine as part of a tutorial about how to use the Web Publishing Wizard from Microsoft. The Web Publishing Wizard 1.6 is part of Internet Explorer 5. You can read this tutorial in Issue 63 of .net on sale in the UK 10th September 1999. Find out about Internet Explorer 5 at the complete Internet Explorer 5 Companion website.
.net
THE UK'S BEST-SELLING INTERNET MAGAZINE
This page will refresh and take you directly to the .net website in 20 seconds
Internet

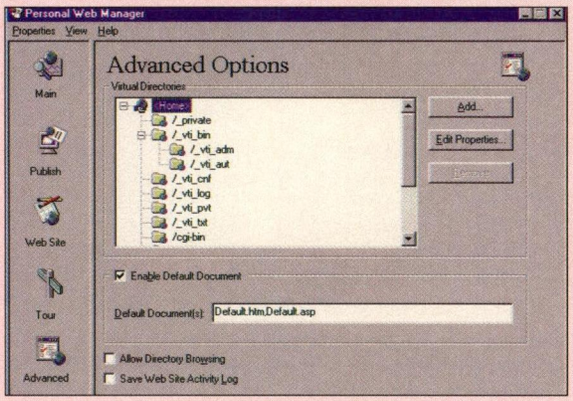
STEP 10 *When the files have been uploaded to your Web space, you will be able to access your Web space in your Web browser – as can everyone else in the world – using the Web address that you were given. The pages you have just uploaded will be there. Remember, one page should be called Index.htm or Default.htm (ideally you should duplicate the file under both names), so it can be sent to any browser that simply tries to access www.yoursubdomain.yourserver.co.uk without a page name on the end.*

Other Web publishing tools

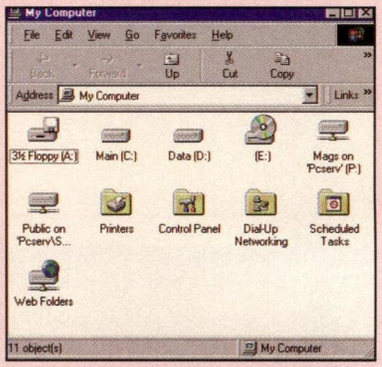
As well as the Web Publishing Wizard, Microsoft has several other free tools which come as part of various Windows updates, so you may already have them on your system without knowing what they're used for. In truth, their names do cause some confusion and Microsoft has done little to exacerbate the situation with its overly technical documentation. Here's a simple explanation of the PWS and WebFolders tools.

PWS

Microsoft's Personal Web Server (PWS) is a real Web server software program which is designed for low-level Internet users. When running, the software enables you to serve up pages from your computer. This has two main uses. First, it enables people to access a Web site which is stored on your hard drive through a local computer network which is not much use to you if you're using a modem. Secondly, the PWS software enables you to test your Web site as if it were being sent from the World Wide Web, without you actually having to upload it. This is useful if your Web site includes non-HTML pages, such as Active Server Pages (ASP) pages, so you can check that the Web pages will work properly once they are online. For more information about Active Server Pages, or ASP, go to www.netmag.co.uk /webbuilder/59aspfocus. The Personal Web Server cannot upload your Web site to your real Web server – this task needs to be done using Microsoft's Web Publishing Wizard or by finding an alternative solution.



Microsoft's Personal Web Server tool enables you to set up a real server on your PC so you can test your site before uploading it



When WebFolders are set up, they act like normal drives on your computer

WebFolders

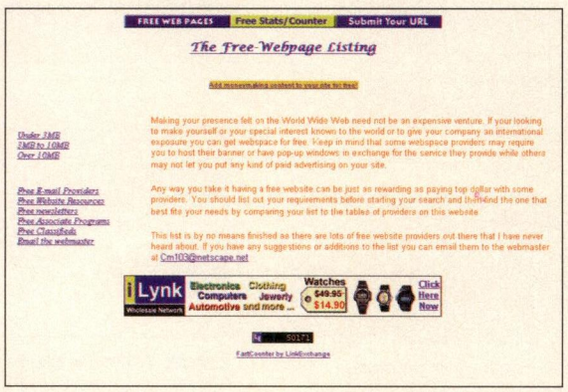
The WebFolders tool was introduced with Microsoft's Internet Explorer 5 Web browser and confused many people when it first came out. You can find the WebFolders tool by opening up the My Computer icon on your desktop – this will show you the contents of your computer. WebFolders is designed to enable you to quickly publish documents, but again it's really designed for people who are publishing documents on a company network rather than on the World Wide Web and requires the support of a company server. Then you can simply publish your pages by dragging and dropping files.

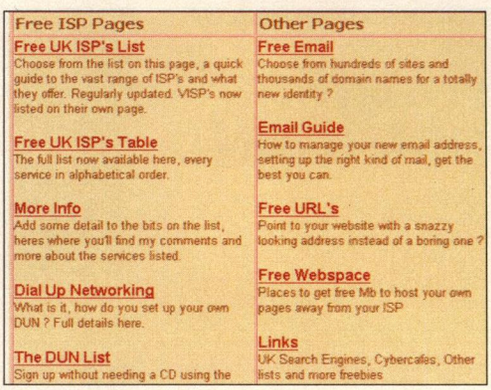
Jargon Buster

ASP (Active Server Page)
An ASP allows you to use server-side scripting. This means that when you request an ASP from a Web server, the server performs the scripting tasks itself before delivering the resulting Web page to the client. When a Web browser requests an ASP page, the Web server generates a page with HTML code and sends it back to the Web browser.

Getting more free Web space

If your ISP doesn't provide free Web space, don't despair – you should find help at these Web sites


FREE WEB PAGES
Free Stats/Counter
Submit Your URL
The Free Webpage Listing
Add mouseover content to your site for free!
Making your presence felt on the World Wide Web need not be an expensive venture. If your looking to make yourself or your special interest known to the world or to give your company an international exposure you can get webspace for free. Keep in mind that some webspace providers may require you to host their banner or have pop-up windows in exchange for the service they provide while others may not let you put any kind of paid advertising on your site.
Under 1MB
1MB to 10MB
Over 10MB
Free E-mail Providers
Free Website Resources
Free newsletters
Free Associate Programs
Free Classifieds
Email the webmaster
Any way you take it having a free website can be just as rewarding as paying top dollar with some providers. You should list out your requirements before starting your search and then find the one that best fits your needs by comparing your list to the tables of providers on this website.
This list is by no means finished as there are lots of free website providers out there that I have never heard about. If you have any suggestions or additions to the list you can email them to the webmaster at Cm103@netscape.net
iLynx
Electronics Clothing Watches
Computers Jewelry $49.95
Automotive and more ... $14.90
Click Here Now
FastCounter by LinkExchange


Free ISP Pages
Free UK ISP's List
Choose from the list on this page, a quick guide to the vast range of ISP's and what they offer. Regularly updated. ISP's now listed on their own page.
Free UK ISP's Table
The full list now available here, every service in alphabetical order.
More Info
Add some detail to the bits on the list, heres where you'll find my comments and more about the services listed.
Dial Up Networking
What is it, how do you set up your own DUN ? Full details here.
The DUN List
Sign up without needing a CD using the
Other Pages
Free Email
Choose from hundreds of sites and thousands of domain names for a totally new identity ?
Email Guide
How to manage your new email address, setting up the right kind of mail, get the best you can.
Free URL's
Point to your website with a snazzy looking address instead of a boring one ?
Free Webspace
Places to get free Mb to host your own pages away from your ISP
Links
UK Search Engines, Cybercafes, Other lists and more freebies

THE FREE WEB-PAGE LISTING *freeweblist.freeservers.com*

This useful site offers links to many of the free Web space providers around the world. You can use these providers, no matter which Internet Service Provider you use. The guide tells you which servers require you to include a banner ad on your Web pages and which ones allow both personal and business pages. Unfortunately some of the services won't be compatible with Microsoft's Web Publishing Wizard as they use proprietary methods. Boo, hiss.

1-2-FREE *www.12free.co.uk/*

This Web site lists many of the new UK free Internet Service Providers together with their DUN access numbers, so you don't have to use your ISP's sign-up software. There's also a list of free Web space providers. You can either set up a new ISP account immediately and use the free Web space included with that account or use one of the Web space providers together with your existing Internet Service Provider. ■

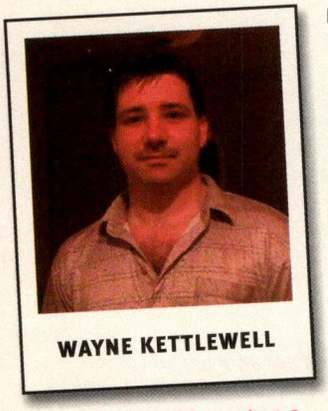
Hints & tips

Publishing a page
If you want to publish a page from a folder, right-click on it and select Send to Web Publishing Wizard. If you want to publish your Web pages, you don't have to use the Web Publishing Wizard. If you have the information from Step 9 on page 29, you can use any FTP client software.

THE GALLERY

Practical Web pages looks at how a passion for Wiltshire, and our eight-legged furry friends led to the creation of two great Web sites

Wayne Kettlewell used to be afraid of going online. Now it's his visitors that are afraid, because his site is dedicated to a common object of human phobia: spiders. "I've liked creepy-crawlies ever since I was a child," he says. "But it was always spiders that fascinated me the most. They're graceful, colourful, and the sheer size of some of them impresses me." Wayne owns over 150, from the common Chilean Rose Tarantula, to the exotic Mombassa Starburst Baboon.



WAYNE KETTLEWELL

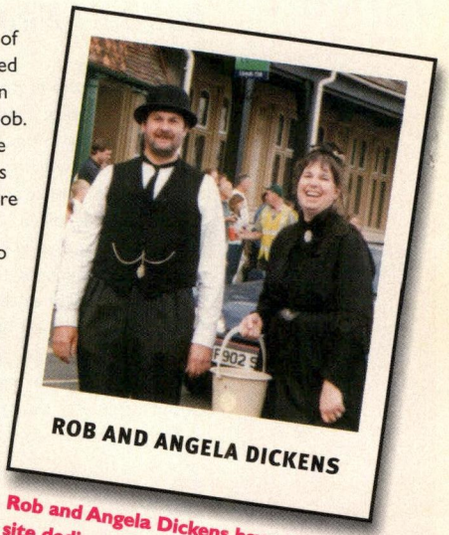
Wayne Kettlewell has set up a fantastic site devoted to tarantulas: our furry friends

A self-taught designer, Wayne had had around four months' Net experience when he launched his Web site, Arachnocity, in 1997. "At the time, I would play around with different programs, mainly WYSIWYG editors, and try and learn the code. If I saw something on the Net I liked, I would copy it and incorporate my own text."

But it was with the discovery of a shareware product – the appropriately named Arachnophilia – that Wayne's coding really took off. "It's a useful program, and it has a built-in FTP utility," he says.

Today, Arachnocity receives over 30 hits a week. "I even get emails from people trying to get rid of their fear of spiders," says Wayne, "saying that the site has helped them look at tarantulas in a new light. It's this sort of feedback that makes me think I've done my job well. I'm always proud to share my knowledge of my furry little friends with the world." ■

For Rob and Angela Dickens, the centre of the universe is a small, rural affair, located five miles east of Avebury. "I was born in the local hospital some 43 years ago," says Rob. "Since then, I have always lived in or near the Town." So when the family came to set up its own Web site, what better subject could there be than Marlborough?



ROB AND ANGELA DICKENS

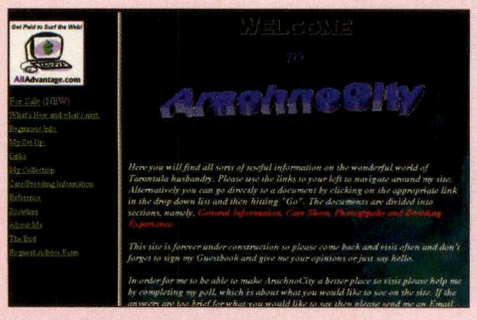
Rob and Angela Dickens have created a site dedicated to their home town of Marlborough, in Wiltshire

"We went online in early 1997, mainly to get information for our children's homework," says Rob. "We'd been on the Internet for five months when I realised that our ISP gave us free Web space, and it seemed silly not to put it to good use."

The site, at that time called Marlborough Images, was soon receiving visitors from all over the world, so Rob and Angela decided to add their email address. "We were soon struggling under a deluge of enquiries," says Rob. "People were asking us where to stay, where to find schools and estate agents, how to get in touch with the local council, and so on. We decided that we had two choices: either go into hiding, or set up Marlborough Online."

Marlborough Online – a complete Internet portal – now occupies 14Mb of Web space, and covers a comprehensive 180 pages. Just updating the content takes between 10 and 15 hours a month. So, what makes all that effort worthwhile?

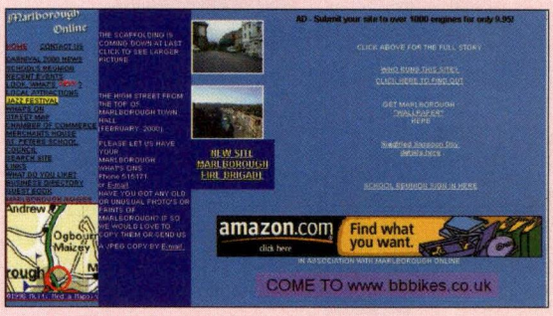
"Friendship!" says Rob. "It's great to hear from people who have left Marlborough and still miss it – it brings back memories. It's worth it for the comments in the guest book alone." ■



ARACHNOCITY

www.madasafish.com/~arachnocity

Even a casual visitor to Wayne's site will be impressed by his enthusiasm for the subject. Whether describing an encounter between an undersized spider and an oversized cricket, or giving an eyewitness account of the Chilean Rose Tarantula's mating habits, it's clear that Wayne loves his spiders. As, indeed, should you. In addition to some handsome photos, there are guides to the care of various species and lots of practical advice. Wayne has created moving text and logos (including a 'Links' page). But Netscape users beware: not every page loads with this browser.



MARLBOROUGH ONLINE

www.marlboroughwilts.co.uk

Marlborough Online contains (almost) everything the virtual Marlburian could ever desire. There's a guide to forthcoming events, a complete business directory (from Egg Merchants to Drain Cleaners) and an interactive map. Former residents include writers William Golding and Siegfried Sassoon, so there are links to appropriate sites. The second part of the site, Marlborough Images, contains over 400 'before and after' shots of the town, contrasting modern photographs with historical material. There are also banner links to ads sites, and some nifty animation.

WYSIWYG edito

Jargon Buster

FTP (File Transfer Protocol)
This is a fast way of uploading and downloading files from the Internet.

Tag
When a document is written in HTML code it is written as a series of commands, or tags. For example, the HTML tags for bold are: <BOLD> and </BOLD.

What are WYSIWYG editors and what can they offer the professional Web builder? Neal Slateford tells you everything you need to know

When the first wave of WYSIWYG HTML editors arrived, we were plying our trade as Web site builders, happily typing in tags manually and perpetually reloading our browser Window to check on our pages' often painfully slow development. Then a copy of one of the first WYSIWYG editors appeared in the office. We gathered around the monitor to witness the seemingly amazing process of actually typing directly on to a Web page, highlighting the text and changing the size, or aligning it to the left or right at the click of a mouse. That's us out of a job, we thought – anyone will be able to knock up a Web page now.

But it didn't work out like that. What appeared to be a technological marvel actually turned out to be pretty flawed; on closer inspection, the first wave of WYSIWYG editors turned out to be, well, not much good at all.

What does WYSIWYG mean?

WYSIWYG is one of those clever anacronyms that Americans are so fond of. It stands for 'What You See Is What You Get' but refers to any software program that enables you to construct Web pages without any knowledge of HTML code. When WYSIWYG editors first came out, it was possible for just about anyone to knock out a Web page for the first time. However, in all probability it would look rubbish, be incompatible with different browsers and put all sorts of horrendous additions to the basic HTML code that made pages incompatible with any other editor. In short, WYSIWYG editors were fine for amateurs, but anyone who wanted professional results still did it all by hand.

So what of today's WYSIWYG editors? They are actually a vast improvement on their predecessors. From the dozens of contenders that swamped the market three years ago, only the fittest have survived. Bugs have been ironed out, and features added. And ironically, mastery of using the top professional packages has become a job requirement almost as important as knowing the fundamentals of HTML itself.

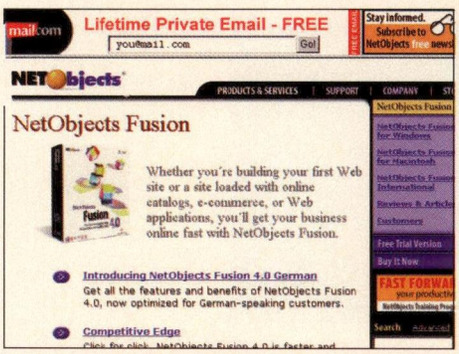
The main players

The great shakeout in the market has left two main sectors – the amateur/hobby market, with free packages from Netscape and Microsoft (Composer and FrontPage Express) proving unsurprisingly popular, and the fully featured giants such as Macromedia's Dreamweaver, Adobe's GoLive and NetObjects' Fusion, some of which cost over £250. So is by-passing the pain of learning HTML worth the investment? And what factors should you consider when choosing a package?

Pros and cons

The first thing you should remember is that whatever editor you use, you'll almost certainly want to get 'under the hood' and fiddle with the HTML at some stage. Editors work by interpreting your actions and turning them into HTML, but sometimes those actions can be misinterpreted and you'll want to correct the code by hand. So having easy access to the HTML code is a feature you will need. Netscape's free Composer tool enables you to look at the HTML you are creating, but to edit the code directly you'll have to open the file in a separate text editor, which is by no means ideal. At the other end of the scale, Macromedia's Dreamweaver uses a system it

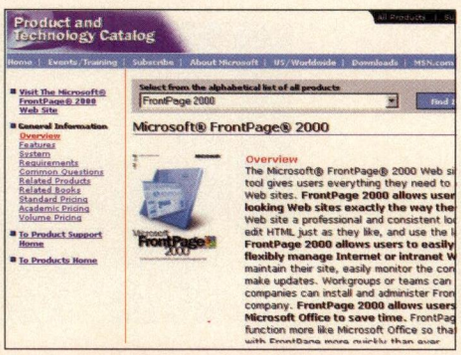
WYSIWYG packages


mail.com
Lifetime Private Email - FREE
NETobjects
NetObjects Fusion
Whether you're building your first Web site or a site loaded with online catalogs, e-commerce, or Web applications, you'll get your business online fast with NetObjects Fusion.
Introducing NetObjects Fusion 4.0 German
Get all the features and benefits of NetObjects Fusion 4.0, now optimized for German-speaking customers.
Competitive Edge

NetObjects Fusion

Price: Around £200
A popular package with professionals that comes with several 'themes' that you can quickly apply to existing sites.

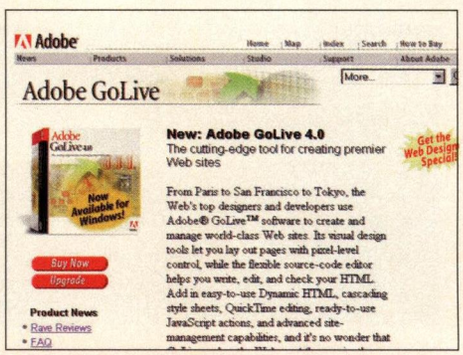
www.netobjects.com/products/html/nfhome.html



Microsoft FrontPage 2000

Price: Around £100
Packed full of site management features, the editor itself is very good but still suffers from proprietary HMTL code creation.

www.microsoft.com/catalog/display.asp?site=768&subid=22



Adobe GoLive

Price: Around £130
Previously known as GoLive CyberStudio, this favourite uses a unique grid feature to position text and objects precisely on a page.

www.adobe.com/prodindex/golive/main.html

rs

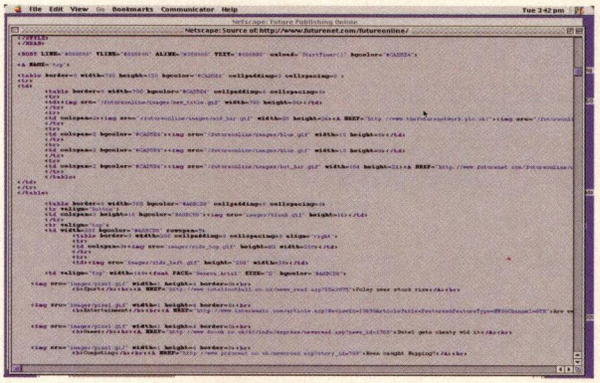
calls 'round trip HTML' – you can edit the HTML code at any time and see the browser window update as you code, and vice versa, which is neat. You get what you pay for.

Dreamweaver also scores for the cleanliness of the HTML code it generates. Some editors will deposit a load of proprietary tags that will at best be ignored by other editors and browsers, or at worst completely mess them up. Adobe's early editor PageMill was notorious for adding proprietary tags, and Microsoft's FrontPage has been another offender. FrontPage curiously produces code that looks fine in Microsoft's own Internet Explorer browser but less great in other browsers, so be warned.

Where WYSIWYGs can score big time is in taking the grind out of arduous HTML tasks. GoLive and Dreamweaver have fabulous tools that make complicated table editing a breeze, and have timelines that make animations using DHTML a doddle. You'll also want to consider whether functions like a good frame editor, site-wide search and replace tools, spell checkers and bundled FTP access are important to you.

Experienced coders will know that authoring HTML to produce pages that look the same in both Netscape Navigator and Internet Explorer can be tricky, because both Web browsers can interpret the same HTML code in different ways. The more professionally targeted packages will keep track and alert you to an potential incompatibilities. Dreamweaver (sorry to keep mentioning it, but it's a great bit of software) will even produce different pages for different browsers, and throw in some JavaScript that will detect the browser the visitor is using and serve up a page to suit accordingly.

One last thing to bear in mind is that no editor is future-proof. With the Web developing at such a breakneck pace, it's almost inevitable that features or HTML tags will emerge that your package won't be able to handle without you getting an upgrade.



Working with a WYSIWYG editor keeps your code tidy and easy to identify

WYSIWYGs can do some wonderful things for both the professional and the amateur user. If you just want a few simple pages and really don't want to look at HTML, they do just fine – start by checking out Netscape's Composer and see how you like it. Alternatively, try a demo of one the more fully featured packages by getting a copy from the Web site or the coverdisc.

For the professional Web designer, WYSIWYG editors can save a great deal of time and frustration, as long as you're aware of the particular quirks of your chosen package It's worth playing around with a package, getting a demo version and seeing it it suits you. The quirks and frustrations caused by one package could be eliminated in another and it may suit you perfectly. It's worth bearing in mind that most Web site builders who use a WYSIWYG do so in conjunction with a traditional text editor, for complete control – the best of both worlds, perhaps. ■

Jargon Buster

DHTML (Dynamic HTML)
A collective term for a combination of new HTML tags and options, style sheets, and programming that will let you create Web pages which are more animated and more responsive to user interaction than previous versions of HTML.

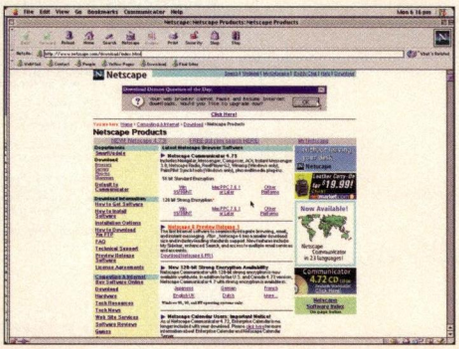
HTML (HyperText Markup Language)
The basic programming language used to create Web pages.

JavaScript
An advanced programming language that enables you to do advanced things on Web pages.

Macromedia Dreamweaver 2.0

Price: Around £250
Currently the choice among Web professionals, Dreamweaver offers the best of both worlds, with text editors BBEdit (Mac) and Homesite (PC).

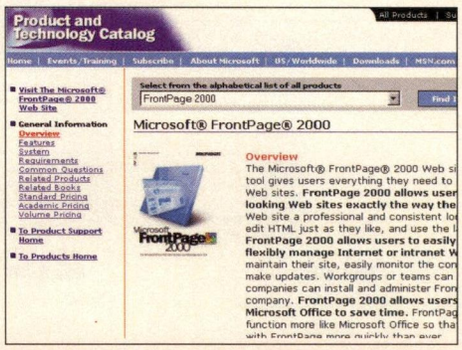
www.dreamweaver.com



Netscape Composer

Price: Free
Netscape bundles its own free WYSIWYG editor with its Communicator suite of software. The most recent release has a host of new features.

www.netscape.com/download/index.html



Microsoft FrontPage Express

Price: Free
The junior version of Uncle Bill's fully featured FrontPage 98 package comes bundled with the latest version of Internet Explorer.

www.microsoft.com/windows/ie

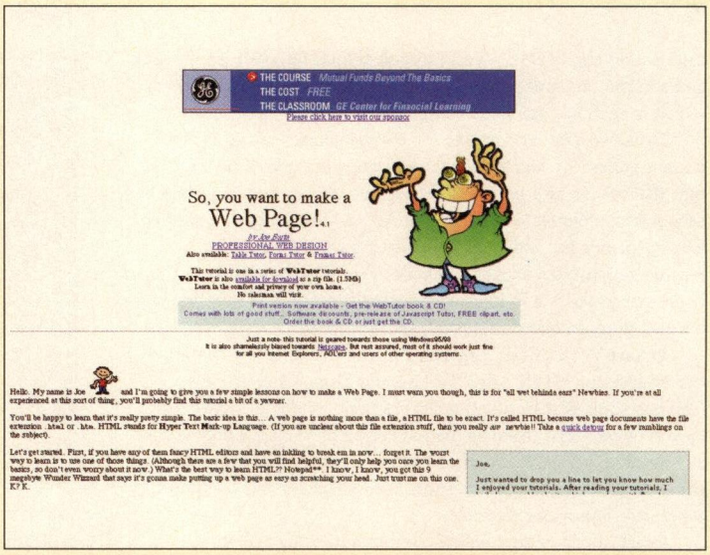
Resources

There's a multitude of resources for beginners on the Web. We've picked out the best for you

Webdesignhelp.com
SEARCH
Teslabyte Home Beginners Reference Chat Scripts Articles WDHnet Free E-mail
Click here
vistaprint .com
250 FREE business cards in full color
WEB DESIGN HELP . COM : BEGINNERS
BY TESLABYTE
BEGINNERS
Beginners Home
Internet History 1
Internet History 2
What is the Internet?
How the Web Works
HTML 1: Background
HTML 2: First Page
HTML 3: More Page
HTML 4: Links
HTML 5: Images
Moving Online For Free
Take the quiz
It all webdesignhelp begins
for beginners HERE
With the dramatic improvement in WYSIWYG editors, such as Macromedia Dreamweaver, many web designers have stopped writing html web pages by hand. Even if you choose to be one of these web designers, it is still very important to know the basics of html, web design, and the Internet. (If you didn't understand the above don't worry, and just keep reading). The following is a six-part, interactive tutorial that will give you a solid foundation for making web pages and becoming a web designer. Covered topics include the history of the Internet and the web, and an understanding of how each functions. In addition, you will learn how to create your first web page and put it online for free. After you complete all six parts of the tutorial, and pass a short quiz, you will get an award. All terms that are used in this tutorial have an associated definition. If you do not know what a term means click on it and a definition will pop-up.
LET'S GET STARTED>>

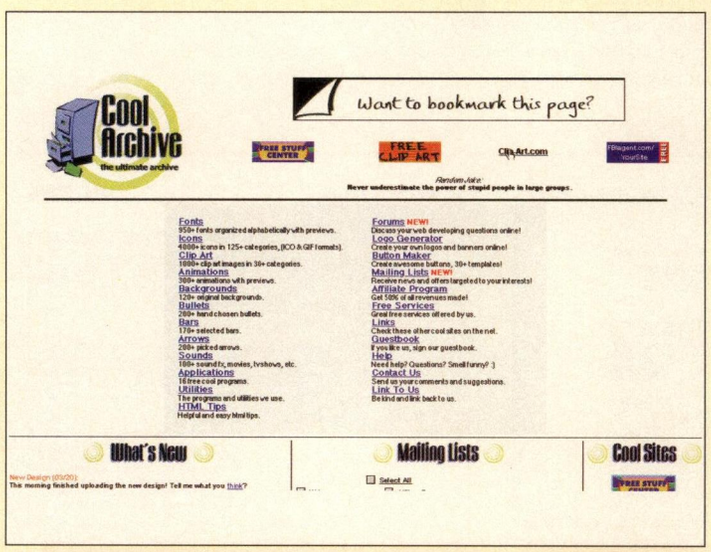
WEB DESIGN HELP www.webdesignhelp.com/beginners

For a complete overview of Web design complete with a history and tutorials, Web design help fits the bill. It's a well-designed easily navigable site that practises what it preaches. Take a note from the designer's book and heed the advice given on the pages. Remember,it's easy for anyone can learn if they've got a good teacher.


THE COURSE Mutual Funds Beyond The Basics
THE COST FREE
THE CLASSROOM GE Center for Financial Learning
So, you want to make a Web Page!
PROFESSIONAL WEB DESIGN
Hello. My name is Joe and I'm going to give you a few simple lessons on how to make a Web Page. I must warn you though, this is for "all wet behinds ears" Newbies. If you're at all experienced at this sort of thing, you'll probably find this tutorial a bit of a yawner.
You'll be happy to learn that it's really pretty simple. The basic idea is this... A web page is nothing more than a file, a HTML file to be exact. It's called HTML because web page documents have the file extension .html or .htm. HTML stands for Hyper Text Mark-up Language. (If you are unclear about this file extension stuff, then you really are newbie!! Take a quick detour for a few ramblings on the subject).
Let's get started. First, if you have any of them fancy HTML editors and have an inkling to break em in now... forget it. The worst way to learn is to use one of those things. (Although there are a few that you will find helpful, they'll only help you once you learn the basics, so don't even worry about it now.) What's the best way to learn HTML?! Notepad**. I know, I know, you got this 9 megbyte Wunder Winnel that says it's gonna make putting up a web page as easy as scratching your head. Just trust me on this one. K? K.
Joe,
Just wanted to drop you a line to let you know how much I enjoyed your tutorials. After reading your tutorials, I

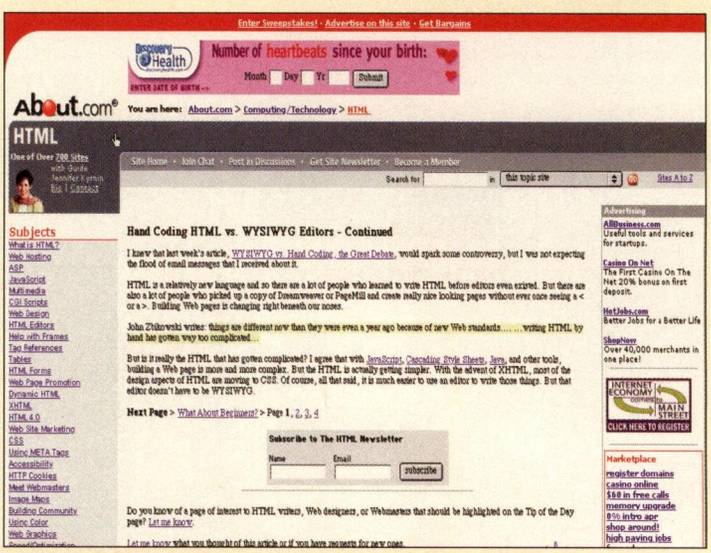
HTML TUTORIALS http://junior.apk.net/~jbarta/makapage/index

You'll find literally thousands of HTML tutorials on the Web. A simple search for HTML will bring them to light. But if you're starting out you'll need something that will take you gently from a-to-b rather than baffle you with jargon. Joe Barta's site takes this into account. While the design is not the greatest, Joe succeeds in taking you through the absolute basics painlessly.



CLIP ART FOR ALL www.coolarchive.com

You'll find 5,000 images on the *Practical Web Pages* cover CD. If you still can't find anything that takes your fancy you could try one of the Clip art sites available to you on the Web. At Cool Archive you'll find thousands of clip art images and to top that there are backgrounds, bullets, arrows, sound bytes, fonts and icons. So if you're short of inspiration head to the Cool Archive and pick up some inspired additions for your site.



WYSISYP VS HTML http://html.about.com/computer/html/library/weekly/aa022100a

So, we've given you an insight into both HTML and WYSIWYG editors. As you can imagine there's a lot of strong feeling from both corners and a heated debate is ongoing. If we've stirred your curiosity about which you'd prefer to use long-term, why don't you check out the current debate at about.com to discover the arguments for and against each and stamp your own opinion on the proceedings. ■

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just-the-name.com
The Domain Name Registration People

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Get online • Send emails • Build a Web site
Your easy guide to the Net
Internet ADVISOR
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Includes CD!
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Issue 15
July 2000
Welcome to Absolute beginners
Inside... 21-page beginner's guide!
Essential sites
Problems solved
Step-by-step guides
All in plain English
MAKE THE MOST OF THE NET!
Banking, shopping, job hunting, chatting, learning... Find out how to do it all online!
Get online... Free with Madasafish
FREE! SOFTWARE WORTH £13.50
Speed up the Net with... SpeedConnect
INTERNET ACCELERATOR
Use our full product for a better, faster Internet connection! (PC only)
FIND THE BEST WEB SITES with our revolutionary new Kenjin software (PC only)
PROTECT YOUR KIDS with our Internet filters CyberPatrol (PC and Mac) and CyberSitter (PC only)
PACKED with essential Internet software for PC and Mac!
WIN! A WEB DESIGN PACKAGE WORTH £180!
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A magazine from Future Publishing

Intermediate

Having worked through the beginners' section of Practical Web Pages, *things now crank up a gear. In this section we take a tour of the Fireworks program to show you how to make great Web graphics*

Alley Web cats

The WEBalley site bowls you over with heaps of useful advice to help you design your own Web site. Have a scan over the mortal sins to learn some good dos and don'ts of Web building, dig into the HTML tutorials, read articles about Web site design issues or create your own Web page using the online Web page generator. When you've read all the articles, done the tutorials and you've created your own Web site, you can use the online 'Web announcer' tool to help you to submit your new Web site to over 70 search engines. Go on, get crawling down the WEBalley (www.weballey.net).

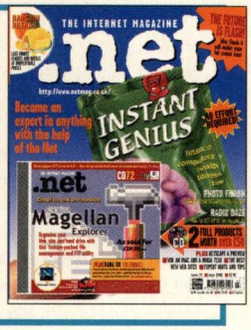
Dump it

Search engines are still one of the most important ways of directing traffic to your Web site, but how do you get yourself listed with them? It's a long and arduous process if you submit your Web site to each one manually because the best results are achieved by submitting more than just your main URL. Save yourself some effort and log on to Dumptruck at www.trafficstudio.com/dumptruck.

Simply load up to 25 URLs into Dumptruck's depository and let it whiz round all the major search engines for you. It's amazing that Dumptruck's creators don't want a penny for the use of their fantastic software – it's completely free of charge. Dumptruck's software is also available from our sister mag, *.net*'s Web site at www.netmag.co.uk/software/freeware. ■

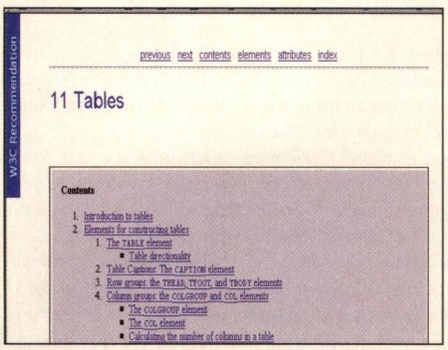
.Net

If what you've learnt so far has intrigued you and you'd like to get more hands on experience of Web design and to find out more about the Internet in all its guises, look out for .net *magazine.* .net *is a magazine for real Internet enthusiasts. Aimed at people who have more than a mild curiosity for the Web, it's current, on the pulse and full of everything you could possibly want to know or do on the Internet.*



Focus on tables

There are many people who don't approve of using of tables to manage Web-page layout – the W3C among them. However, visit a collection of Web sites that you think are well designed and easy to navigate and take a look at the source code. We think you'll find tables aplenty, and for a good reason: they make controlling your layout so easy.



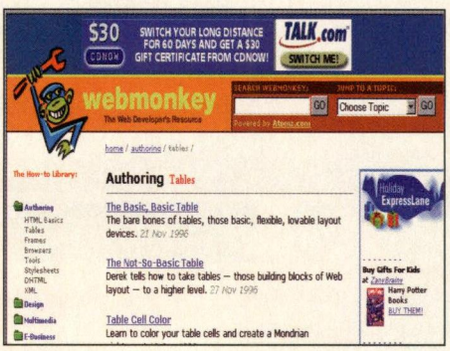
W3C Recommendations

Find out what the World Wide Web Consortium has to say about tables. It doesn't necessarily make for the lightest reading, nor does it in fact endorse using tables purely as a means of laying out documents, but you will find useful information about what they can and can't do.

FreeLinks.Com: Tools, resources, & tutorials to help you...
Get More Web Site Traffic!
The 1x1 Pixel Image Table Trick
Aligning tables with an invisible image

PageResource.com

Having problems with your table layout? Try out the 1x1-pixel image trick to help control the width of the cells within your tables. There are those who consider it to be bad design, but it can be very useful for getting your tables to behave as you would like.



Webmonkey

One of the best resources on using tables to control layout can be found at Webmonkey. You'll find a genuine enthusiasm for using them here – not unlike our own. In addition to the basics of tables, you'll find a useful article on how to reduce the amount of code when using tables.

Content is king

*The secret of every great site is the quality of its content. **Chris Mitchell** reveals how to make your Web creation king of the Internet castle*

Hints & tips

Use other peoples' content

If as you're looking around other peoples Web sites you find some content you feel would integrate well with your own, send them an email. Ask if you can use their content. Negotiate a link back to their site. Reciprocal links are beneficial and most people are flattered that you value their content enough to want to use it.

What makes a good Web site? If we had a penny for every time we've been asked this question, we'd all have enough copper-coloured coinage to quit our jobs and spend the rest of our days frolicking in some idyllic foreign clime. There are millions of Web sites out there that think they have the answer, but the most successful ones, whatever their subject matter and however radical their site design, all subscribe to one golden rule: content is king.

It's a phrase that has become something of a mantra within the Internet industry, but there are still plenty of Web sites that manage to ignore it. Companies blithely spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on a Web presence with lots of noisy bells and whistles, but a deafening silence on the content front. This is why there are so many Web sites put together by folks in their living rooms that outclass big, corporate, moneybag efforts. Harry Knowles' movie rumour site Ain't It Cool News (www.aint-it-cool-news.com) is a classic example.

You don't have to be a brilliant Web site designer to create a fantastic Web site, because what matters most is the information you present on that site, not necessarily the way it's presented. Shockwave, Java, RealAudio and the other multimedia Web technologies have their part to play, but the core of any Web site's content is held in the text on its pages. If you produce good prose (or poetry, for that matter) for your pages, you'll entertain your site's visitors and make both your site and yourself look a lot more interesting to the rest of the world.

A cunning plan

As with most things in life, the first rule of creating great content is to start with a plan. It's amazing how much time, effort and money can be expended for very little result if you aren't careful (just look at the Millennium Dome), so make sure you've got a clear idea of what you want to do with your site before you start building it.

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Poker
Trivia
Play
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Search Past Issues
View More Options
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E-mail Publishing Book
Go To The Forums
E-mail The Editor
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Latest Weekly Issue
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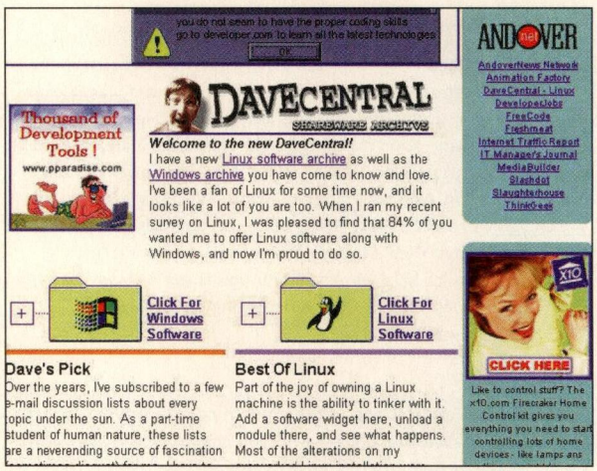
HTML Daily issues are mailed out on weekdays; they're colorful, graphical, & informational. The classic Text Weekly is a weekend digest; its contents are composed of that week's HTML Daily

Lockergnome: loads of Windows information, all presented in a pleasant chatty style


you do not seem to have the proper coding skills
go to developer.com to learn all the latest technologies
OK
ANDOVER
AndoverNews Network
Animation Factory
DaveCentral - Linux
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DAVECENTRAL
SHAREWARE ARCHIVE
Thousand of Development Tools !
www.pparadise.com
Welcome to the new DaveCentral!
I have a new Linux software archive as well as the Windows archive you have come to know and love. I've been a fan of Linux for some time now, and it looks like a lot of you are too. When I ran my recent survey on Linux, I was pleased to find that 84% of you wanted me to offer Linux software along with Windows, and now I'm proud to do so.
Click For Windows Software
Click For Linux Software
X10
CLICK HERE
Like to control stuff? The x10.com Firecracker Home Control kit gives you everything you need to start controlling lots of home devices - like lamps and
Dave's Pick
Over the years, I've subscribed to a few e-mail discussion lists about every topic under the sun. As a part-time student of human nature, these lists are a neverending source of fascination
Best Of Linux
Part of the joy of owning a Linux machine is the ability to tinker with it. Add a software widget here, unload a module there, and see what happens. Most of the alterations on my

Dave Central: stacks of helpful software recommendations from that nice man Dave

Because it still isn't as pleasant to read from a screen as it is from a page, your visitors will appreciate it if you cut to the chase with your prose and keep the stories to one Web page and within a couple of screens-worth of scrolling

Choose a subject and stick to it. People are far more likely to enjoy your site if it's a good resource about a certain topic rather than a mish-mash of freebies and borrowed content that can be found in a hundred other places on the Net already.

If you want to build in multimedia such as Shockwave, Java and so on, think carefully about exactly how much it will add to your visitors' enjoyment of your Web site. Shockwave placed on a Web page for the sake of it is unlikely to impress anyone, whereas Shockwave designed to enhance the reader's enjoyment will win you brownie points. The Shockwave Generation Game on the BBC's Web site (www.bbc.co.uk/generationgame/convbelt.shtml) is a good example of Shockwave fun that adds to the text information on the page.

Never foist Web multimedia on your readers – always give them the option to see it in action or not. They may just be interested in the text on your Web site and may not want to watch a lengthy intro with your latest Java creation, heartbreaking though that may be. (If you really must include a lengthy intro, always give your visitors the option to skip it.)

The Internet is a hungry beast, and if you've chosen to set up a site about a particular subject, the best way to keep your readers

happy is to update your site regularly, whether it be daily, weekly or monthly. You can set up a mailing list to keep your readers posted about new material.

Once you've figured out what exactly you want to do on the Web, it's time to seek the muse and write fabulous prose that will have your site's visitors hungrily digesting every page you've got.

Write on

Now, while we don't want to get all tweed-jacket-with-leather-patched-elbows on you, it's important to remember that good writing revolves around simple sentence structure, good punctuation and decent spelling. The quickest way to destroy visitors' confidence in your hard work is to scatter typos and paragraph-long sentences throughout your prose. Not only will your visitors lose confidence in you, they will quickly turn their attentions elsewhere.

Think about what you write – bang your words into a word processor first rather than straight into your Web editor, so you can ponder the best way of phrasing what you want to say without being distracted by all that HTML code nonsense. Peruse sites with distinctive writing styles to get a feel for the way you want to present your own words.

You could adopt the classic, impartial, fact-relating style of the BBC (www.bbc.co.uk), Guardian (www.guardian.co.uk) or Electronic Telegraph (www.telegraph.co.uk), or go for something more witty and subversive, such as the reporting styles of IT news site The Register (www.theregister.co.uk) and tech site Ninfomania (www.ninfomania.com). While this journalistic style won't suit every type of site, it's useful to examine these sites anyway to see how they manage to present information with the minimum of waffle.

Perhaps you'd like to keep your tone personal, like Dave Central's massive software archive (www.davecentral.com) and Chris Pirillo's excellent Windows newsletter Lockergnome (www.lockergnome.com). Both these sites make a vast and potentially daunting subject friendly and easy to understand by being straight up about how they work and by writing in a lively, approachable style.

Rather than pretending they're big, faceless, corporate entities, both Dave and Chris readily admit that they run their Web operations from home and give information about new software to their readers in the style of an informed friend having a chat. Because their prose is well written and well informed, and their sites regularly updated, they've both built up huge, worldwide audiences who trust their software recommendations. This also makes their sites a lot more entertaining to use than, say, the excellent but somewhat anonymous download site Tucows (www.tucows.com). By presenting information in a pleasant, chatty, informal way, you can get readers coming back to you again and again, providing, of course, that you check your facts.

Whatever writing style you decide to go for, avail yourself of the spellchecking and word-count facilities of your word-processing package at every opportunity. Even the best writers manage to make some monumental spelling blunders, but there's really no excuse for letting spelling mistakes creep into the finished text on your Web site when spellcheckers are so readily available. (If you can't afford the likes of Microsoft Word, try out StarOffice, a widely acclaimed and completely free office software suite which is downloadable from www.sun.com). Similarly, make use of such great online facilities as the Cambridge Dictionary (www.cup.cam.ac.uk/elt/dictionary) to check your favourite word

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News
Affiliates
- Online Since 1993 -
Help!
Shop
Quick Search:
Win95/98
Search
Options
FOR THE FASTEST Downloads Go Local - Choose your region below:
Africa | Asia/Middle East | Australia | Canada | Caribbean | Central America/Mexico | Europe | South America | United States
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TUKIDS NEW!
The greatest place on the Network for kids! Offers the latest software, online games and coloring fun just for kids!
Music NEW!
An MP3 site that finally checks the QUALITY of music that is uploaded? Click here for free MUSIC that doesn't suck!
HTMLStuff NEW!
Learn how to build your own web site! Tools, utilities, how tu's and more. Find it here!
News NEW!
News from around the Network and around the globe all in one easy to find place! Click here
What's Moo!
TUKIDS.TUCOWS.COM Launches
Shop on TUCOWS Cool 3D Text and FX
HTMLStuff Launches!

Tucows (www.tucows.com) may be a great download site, but it isn't very friendly. You just grab and go

actually means what you think it does. If you've run out of good words, try Merriam-Webster's WWWebster Thesaurus (www.m-w.com/thesaurus.htm). For a combination of thesaurus, dictionary and online translator, give Dictionary.com (www.dictionary.com).a try. If you have a specific question about grammar, you can ask Doctor Dictionary.

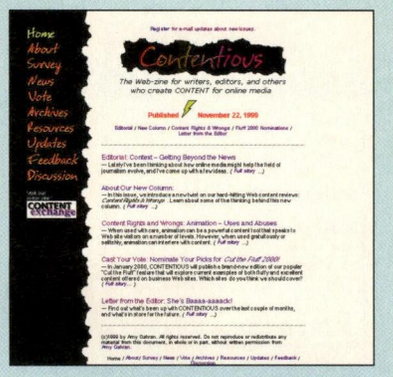
Chinwag with other writers

Ask professional writers how they manage to churn out well-written words in the face of tight deadlines, and the inevitable response will be, "Practice". Just as you need to pump iron down the gym to become the next Mr Universe, you need to flex your writing muscles regularly if you want to get good at producing perfect prose.

Contentious.com is a great Web site to keep an eye on if you're keen to improve your scribbling skills. It's a thriving site aimed at professional writers and editors who produce content specifically for the Internet.

The brainchild of freelance writer and editor Amy Gahran, Contentious.com is one of the few sites which is squarely aimed at making your site's written content sparkle.

As Amy Gahran says herself, "Visit your local bookstore and you'll find tons of information about HTML, design, Java applets, file formats, video, sound and the like... but generally very, very little (if anything at all) on writing and editing for online media, or even content planning!"



There's nothing contentious about the usefulness of this Web site for Web content creators

Contentious.com's slew of well-informed articles are great both for getting a broader view of what other writers are doing on the Web and for winnowing out tips on how to refine your own writing. Take advantage of the experience of others and soon you'll find your own site's content improving dramatically.

In brief

As we've mentioned, one of the greatest merits of online reporting sites such as The Register (www.theregister.co.uk) and Ninfomania (www.ninfomania.com) is that they keep their articles short and sharp. Because it still isn't as pleasant to read from a screen as it is from a page, your visitors will appreciate it if you cut to the chase with your prose and keep the stories to one Web page and within a couple of screens-worth of scrolling.

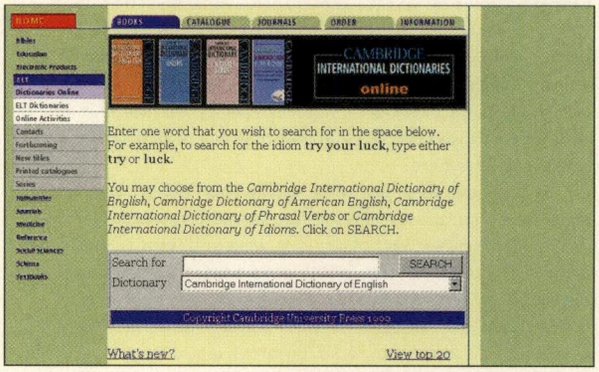
There are some notable exceptions to this rule, such as Wired News (www.wired.com), Salon magazine (www.salon.com) and the Web site of our sister magazine, *.net* (www.netmag.co.uk), where articles are lengthy enough to be split over several pages. In each case you'll find that the reader is given the article title and a brief synopsis at the beginning, rather than being plunged straight into the article itself. This helps readers to decide which articles they want to investigate.

There are a couple of simple rules of thumb to follow with the presentation of any length of text. Put a line of white space between each paragraph to make your words easier to scan for the impatient surfer. Don't leave your text to run the full width of your user's screen – this makes it difficult to read. Take a look at the way Wired, Salon, the BBC and numerous others present their text, which is within a simple table cell about 400 pixels wide. This gives roughly the same width of text as you'll find in a paperback book and makes your prose more aesthetically pleasing and easier to read.

While Times New Roman is the default font of the Internet and perfectly readable, you might want to consider using the Verdana font on your Web pages, because it was designed by those nice folk at Microsoft specifically for reading text on screens. It also gives your Web pages a clean, contemporary look. Wired News uses Verdana to great effect.

Avoid using italics (the <I> tag) on Web pages if you can, because they aren't particularly legible. Over-use of capital letters is also unsightly and hard on the eye. Finally, never commit the cardinal sin of underlining text on a page for emphasis or to indicate a heading, title or caption. Underlining should only ever be used to indicate a link to another Web page, so if you want to make something stand out, use the bold tag instead. As with any other medium, the devil is in the detail when it comes to formatting text on the Internet. If you stick by these rules, you'll find the combined effect makes your Web pages much easier to read and use.

Go to About.com and search for 'Writing for the Web' for a plethora of helpful links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online
Enter one word that you wish to search for in the space below. For example, to search for the idiom try your luck, type either try or luck.
You may choose from the Cambridge International Dictionary of English, Cambridge Dictionary of American English, Cambridge International Dictionary of Phrasal Verbs or Cambridge International Dictionary of Idioms. Click on SEARCH.
Search for
SEARCH
Dictionary
Cambridge International Dictionary of English
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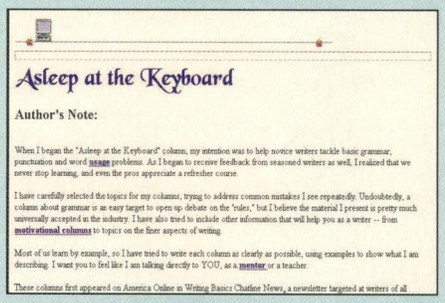
What's new?
View top 20

Swot up on spelling and be sure you know what you're talking about with the online edition of the Cambridge dictionary (www.cup.cam.ac.uk/elt/dictionary)

Copycats

While the Net has begun to cause its fair share of copyright headaches for lawyers around the world, it's worth remembering

Resource sites

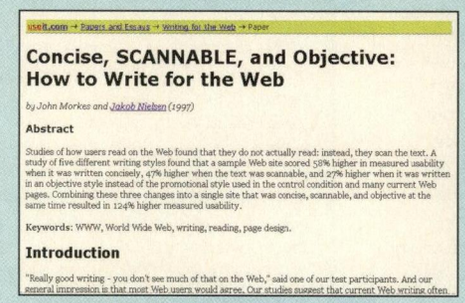


Asleep at the Keyboard

Tackle basic grammar, punctuation and word-usage problems with this site.
http://members.aol.com/cokicola/keyboard.htm

Missing from the Web

Don't know what to use as the subject for your site? Get some ideas about things other people think are missing from the Web at this useful discussion forum.
http://192.41.61.81/mftw.html

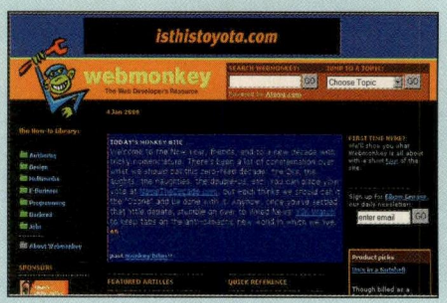

useit.com → Papers and Essays → Writing for the Web → Paper
Concise, SCANNABLE, and Objective: How to Write for the Web
by John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen (1997)
Abstract
Introduction

Writing for the Web – the Basics

Start off with some ground-level writing tips.
www.webnovice.com/webwritept1.htm

The Writing on the Web

Overview of why Web writing requires a different approach
www.hotwired.com/webmonkey/99/32/index0a.html



How to Write for the Web

Search out some inspiration and find good advice from erstwhile Web-site usability guru Jakob Nielsen.
www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html

that the creator of a Web page automatically holds the copyright to all the material they've generated for it. This doesn't have to be explicitly asserted anywhere on the site, although it's more professional to do so.

Don't be tempted to 'borrow' content from other sites just because it's as easy as cutting and pasting the information from their Web page to yours. It's illegal, immoral and could land you in big trouble if the company concerned has Rottweiler-like lawyers (is there any other kind?).

Of course, if you find people have been pilfering content from your Web pages, you may not have a crack squad of legal eagles ready to descend upon them. No matter – send a polite but firm email asking them to cease and desist and they'll probably comply. If that doesn't work, then it's worth contacting us at Practical Web Pages, because the likelihood of bad press should provide enough clout to solve the problem.

The final word

As you'll have gathered, writing for the Web is a skill that needs to be mastered just as much as building sites. Thankfully there isn't as steep a learning curve with writing, because we all do it anyway, and rather than having to wrestle with arcane code commands, you can improve your writing by applying common sense. You don't have to become the next Booker Prize winner to write good prose for your Web site; just bear in mind the idiosyncrasies of the medium you're working with.

While mastering Web writing might not seem as exciting as playing around with the latest Web-site-building widgets, it's certainly the more important skill in terms of producing a site that people will enjoy and to which they'll return. A collection of well-written text pages will get far more attention than a rag-tag collection of Web gizmos. ■

useit.com → Papers and Essays → Writing for the Web → Paper

Concise, SCANNABLE, and Objective: How to Write for the Web

by John Morkes and Jakob Nielsen (1997)

Abstract

Studies of how users read on the Web found that they do not actually read: instead, they scan the text. A study of five different writing styles found that a sample Web site scored 58% higher in measured usability when it was written concisely, 47% higher when the text was scannable, and 27% higher when it was written in an objective style instead of the promotional style used in the control condition and many current Web pages. Combining these three changes into a single site that was concise, scannable, and objective at the same time resulted in 124% higher measured usability.

Keywords: WIWW, World Wide Web, writing, reading, page design.

Unfortunately, this paper is written in a print writing style and is somewhat too academic in style. We know this is bad, but the paper was written as the traditional way of reporting on a research study. We have a short summary that is more suited for online reading.

Introduction

"Really good writing - you don't see much of that on the Web," said one of our test participants. And our general impression is that most Web users would agree. Our studies suggest that current Web writing often does not support users in achieving their main goal: to find useful information as quickly as possible.

We have been running Web usability studies since 1994 [Nielsen 1994b, Nielsen and Sano 1994, Nielsen 1995]. Our studies have

For more information about writing on the Web, head for www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/writing.html

Do as they do

When in doubt, take your lead from top sites such as these:

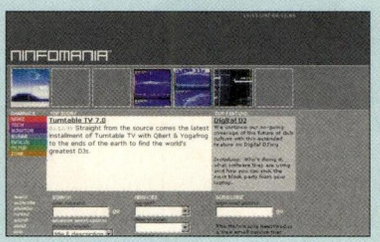
THE Register
Biting the hand that feeds IT
ONLY THE Register TELLS IT LIKE IT IS
Israeli lawyer mounts $129m Y2k suit against MS
MS reorg downscales Millennium as focus shifts to CE
Pentium III-800 benchmarks pop on Web
AMD likely to beat Intel, Alpha to 1GHz punch
BOOTNOTES

THE REGISTER
www.theregister.co.uk
Pithy UK IT news, served up fresh every day

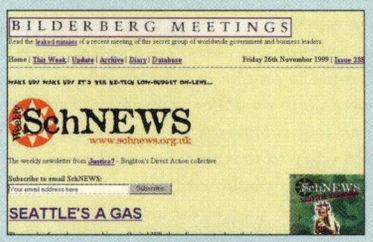
THE MONKEES HIT THE NET
AINT IT COOL NEWS
Harry undertakes a top secret mission to get a glimpse of the inside of X-MEN... details on CEREBRO, Costumes & more..
Lil Von Shtupp has left the stage... one last time
Find Out How YOU Can Help With BUTT-NUMB-A-THON!!! TAKE PART!!! DO IT FOR THE KIDS!!!
A Coin Flip of a Print Ending for FREDDY VS JASON?
The Yattering wallows in FLIGHT

AINT IT COOL NEWS
www.aint-it-cool-news.com
The latest movie rumours in the inimitable style of Harry Knowles

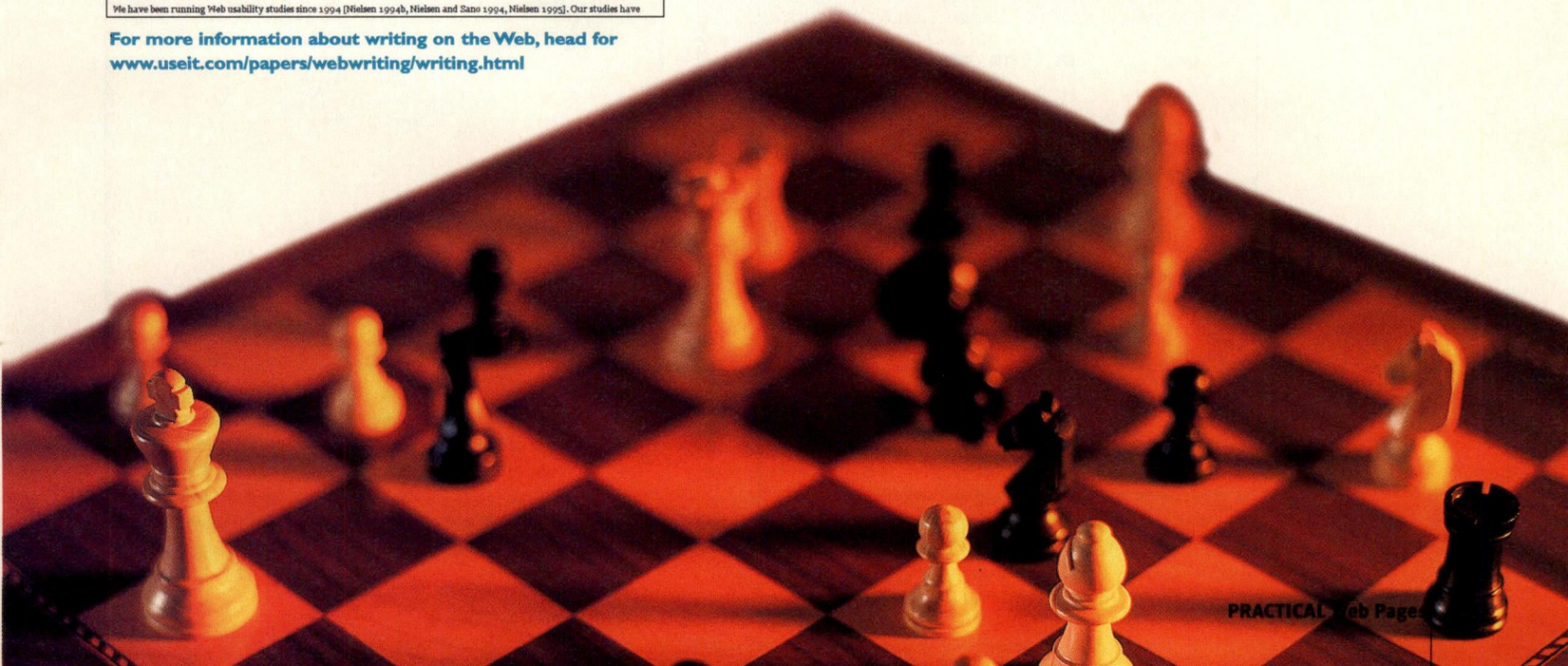
BBC NEWS
http://news.bbc.co.uk
World-class writing covering the entire globe



NINFOMANIA
www.ninfomania.com
Bizarre tech stories and industry-insider news



SCHNEWS
www.schnews.org.uk
The scandals UK politicians don't want you to hear about



In brief

SOFTWARE:
FrontPage Express

PROJECT:
Making tables

TIME: 1 hour

Making tables

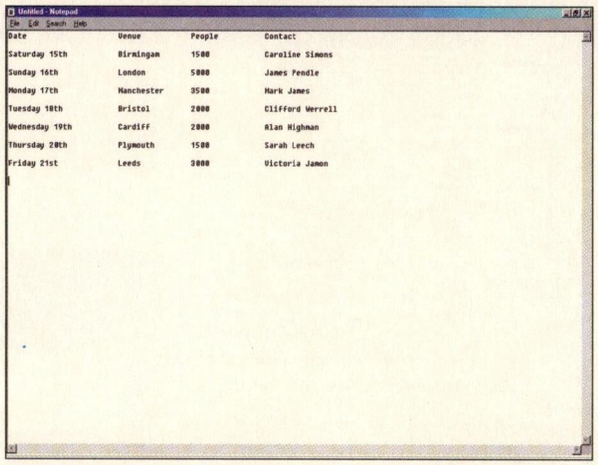
Use tables to keep your pages orderly, neat and stylish. Here's how...

Frontpage Express is a great tool for beginners to use to start building Web sites, although its functions are limited. However, one of its more advanced and extremely handy features is that it makes it very straightforward for you to insert tables into your Web pages. Tables provide the anchor for keeping your copy neatly within a specified area. You may have noticed on the pages that you've already built, that the pages look great before you upload them on to the Internet, but once they are uploaded and you change the size of your Web browser the text flies around the screen and your pictures reappear in completely the wrong place. You can use tables to stop this from happening.

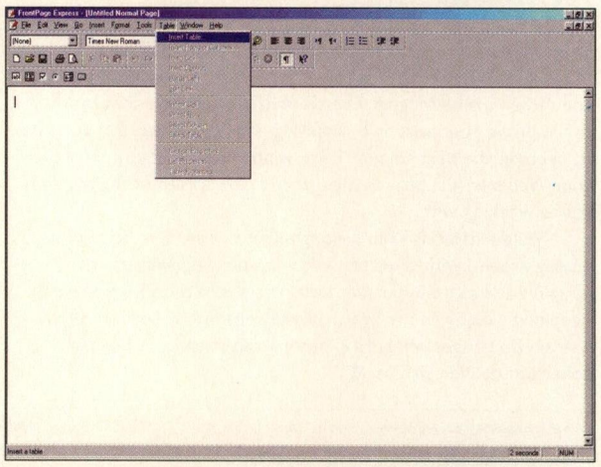
Hints & tips

Save your files locally

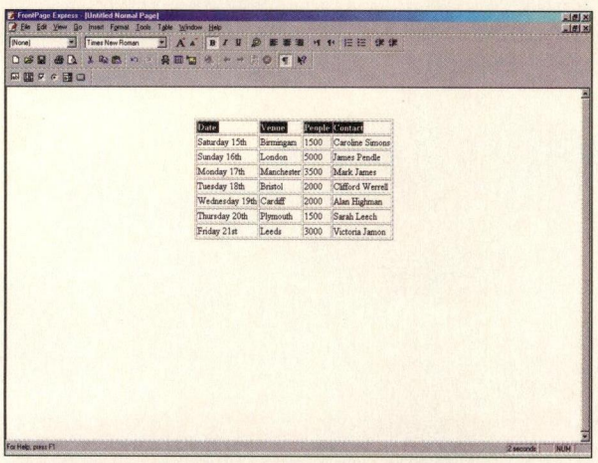
You can save your files locally and come back to them at a later date to update, change and improve them.


Untitled - Notepad
Date Venue People Contact
Saturday 15th Birmingam 1500 Caroline Simons
Sunday 16th London 5000 James Pendle
Monday 17th Manchester 3500 Mark James
Tuesday 18th Bristol 2000 Clifford Werrell
Wednesday 19th Cardiff 2000 Alan Highman
Thursday 20th Plymouth 1500 Sarah Leech
Friday 21st Leeds 3000 Victoria Jamon

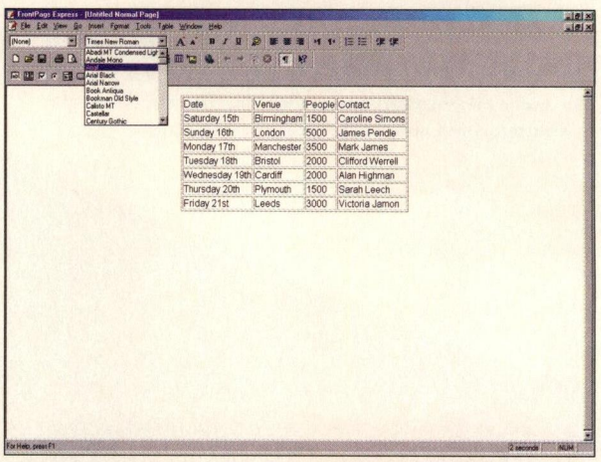
STEP 1 *If you want to replicate printed tables from a magazine or book online, you can use FrontPage Express' table tool to do so. It's simple to master. In this instance we're turning a schedule into an online table. You'll notice that there are eight rows and four columns. Each one is labelled neatly with tabs between each entry so that they line up. This schedule has been created in a Notepad document.*



STEP 2 *Having identified the content that you'd like to tabulate, open FrontPage Express, keeping the word processing document in the background. From the menu across the top of the browser select Table. The only option you'll be given is to insert table. Choose this option. This will bring up a menu giving options for sizing your table. Here you're given the option of choosing the number of rows and columns you want.*


FrontPage Express - [Untitled Normal Page]
Date Venue People Contact
Saturday 15th Birmingam 1500 Caroline Simons
Sunday 16th London 5000 James Pendle
Monday 17th Manchester 3500 Mark James
Tuesday 18th Bristol 2000 Clifford Werrell
Wednesday 19th Cardiff 2000 Alan Highman
Thursday 20th Plymouth 1500 Sarah Leech
Friday 21st Leeds 3000 Victoria Jamon

STEP 5 *In order to transfer our schedule we need to cut and paste the text from the Notepad document into the table. Select each entry individually, by holding down your mouse button and highlighting the text. Choose copy from the drop-down menu at the top of the page. Move to the Frontpage Express document and activate your cursor in the relevant cell. Paste the entry on to the table using Control V.*


FrontPage Express - [Untitled Normal Page]
Date Venue People Contact
Saturday 15th Birmingham 1500 Caroline Simons
Sunday 16th London 5000 James Pendle
Monday 17th Manchester 3500 Mark James
Tuesday 18th Bristol 2000 Clifford Werrell
Wednesday 19th Cardiff 2000 Alan Highman
Thursday 20th Plymouth 1500 Sarah Leech
Friday 21st Leeds 3000 Victoria Jamon

STEP 6 *Now style up the table to suit your needs. Highlight the text in the cells, then move the cursor to the font box at the top of the screen. The drop-down menu gives you a number of font choices. For best viewing on a Web page choose Arial, Helvetica or Times New Roman. Most browsers will support these fonts. If you go for something more imaginative, check it works on the browsers you want to support.*

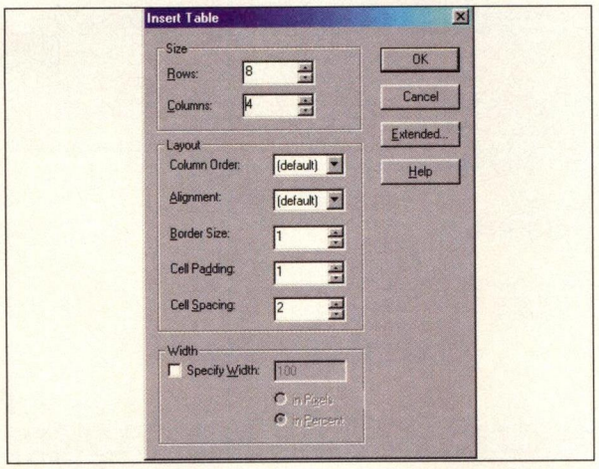
The table is made up of rows and columns and forms a grid into which you can specify widths and heights in both percentages and number of pixels. All you need to do them is to drop words and pictures into the page where you want them. So if you want to dictate exactly where words and pictures go on the page use this step-by-step guide to find out exactly how to use tables to give you control over your design and help you to create stylish Web pages.

Jargon Buster

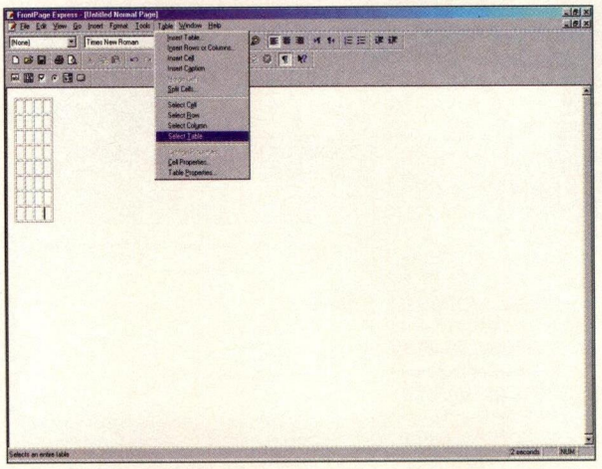
Cell
The empty space created between the rows and columns

Cell padding
The number of pixels that pad the inside of each cell.

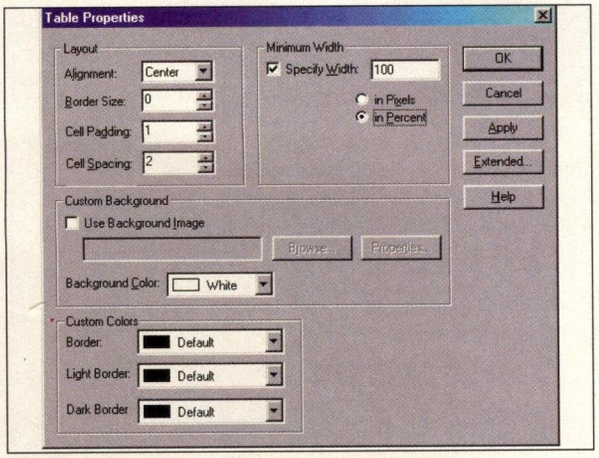
Pixels
Digital images are made up of tiny squares, each of these is called a pixel.



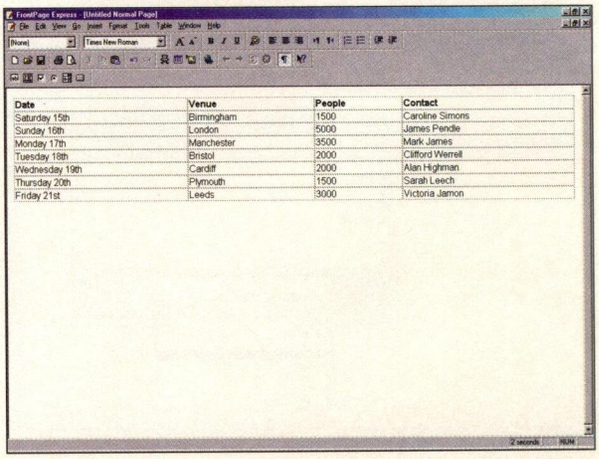
STEP 3 *Remember that lines go across the page and the columns go down. We've already identified that we need eight rows and four columns. The next choice determines layout. If you work with a border of 1, it will help you to see what you are doing and you can turn the border off once you are happy with the finished table. Cell padding and cell spacing determine the number of pixels that pad the inside of each cell.*



STEP 4 *The table will appear as a compact grid with a narrow border. You can change the dimensions as you add content. As you click your cursor in each of the cells you'll discover that you can add text to the cell. As you do the size of each cell will change. The column will always remain the same width as the longest entry in the cell and the row will remain the same size as the longest entry in each row.*



STEP 7 *Now tidy up your table. Select Table from the top bar and choose Table Properties. All we're doing is making sure that the table is lined up as we want and that the border that we used as a guide is turned off. Turn the Border size to 0. You can experiment here and see what happens if you change some of the other parameters of your table. If you want to change them back all you need to do is to repeat this step.*



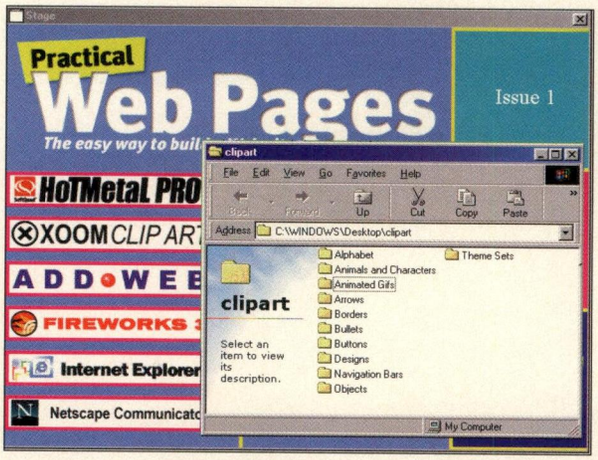
Date	Venue	People	Contact
Saturday 15th	Birmingham	1500	Caroline Simons
Sunday 16th	London	5000	James Pendle
Monday 17th	Manchester	3500	Mark James
Tuesday 18th	Bristol	2000	Clifford Werrell
Wednesday 19th	Cardiff	2000	Alan Highman
Thursday 20th	Plymouth	1500	Sarah Leech
Friday 21st	Leeds	3000	Victoria Jamon

STEP 8 *Now that your table is finished the Web page should emulate the original document. You'll see that there is still a light dotted line around the table. This is only a guide and once the Web page is published you won't see this. If you want to go on to publish this page the FrontPage Express publishing wizard will take you through the process. Or you could try creating further tables, adding pictures and graphics, locally.* ■

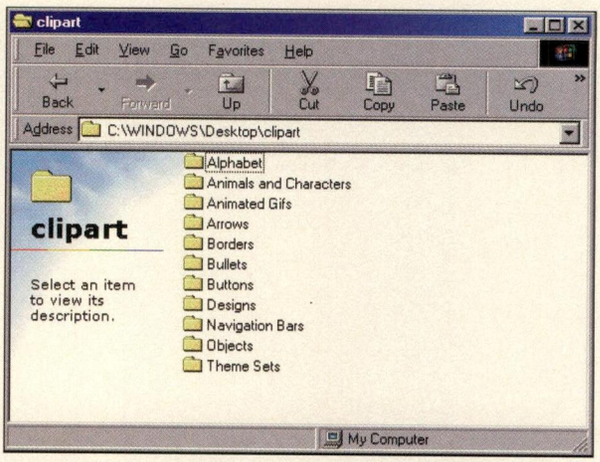
How to use clip art

No Web site is complete without some images and we've got 5,000 of them on our cover CD. We'll even show you how to use them...

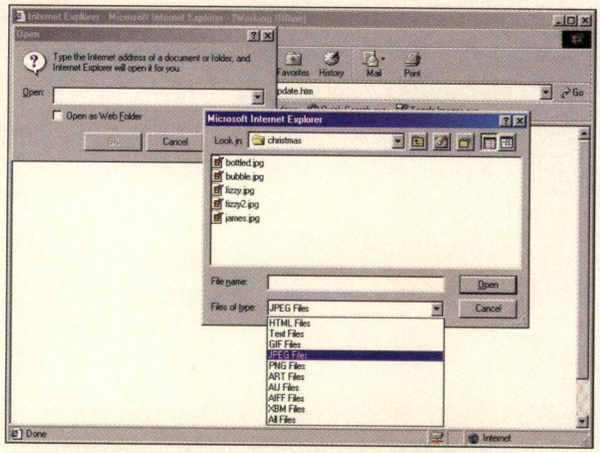
Xoom has compiled 150,000 pieces of clip art, photographs, animated GIFs (GIFs that move - see Jargon buster) and sounds, and has squeezed them all on to a set of six CD-ROMs. We've chosen 5,000 of the best clip art and animated GIFs from this collection and have included them on this month's cover CD-ROM. These images can be used on Web pages, or in most graphics, desktop publishing and word processing packages. We've included a range of different items. Take a look at our wide selection of borders, for example, in a great variety of colours and styles. Make your pages move with hundreds of animated GIF graphics files. We've also included lots of graphical 'objects', including items as wide-ranging as animals, people and money.



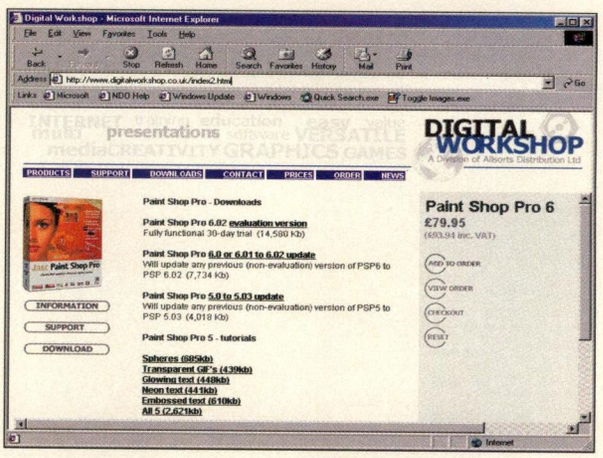
STEP 1 *To access the 5,000 clip art images that we've included on the Practical Web Pages CD-ROM, first put the disc into your CD-ROM drive. The CD interface will now open showing you the options on the CD. Next, click the XOOM clip art button. All of the 5000 images are within this folder. The CD folder containing the clip art will now open on your screen and you can start looking through to see which images you'd like to use on your site.*



STEP 2 *The clip art which we've included on the cover CD is grouped by type into folders. The folder that you have just opened contains a list of these groupings. As you'll see there's a choice of alphabets, animals, animated gifs, arrows, borders, bullets, buttons, designs, navigation bars, objects and different themes. Open any of these and you'll see more folders, each containing a multitude of different colours and types of clip art.*



STEP 5 *To view images in Internet Explorer, select File then Open. Click Browse, and have a look through the files to find the one containing your images. The images that can be viewed on a browser are GIF and JPEG files. To be able to see the image files you'll need to select the GIF file or JPEG file types in the 'Files of Type' box (see the jargon buster for more information!) Double-click the file to open it.*

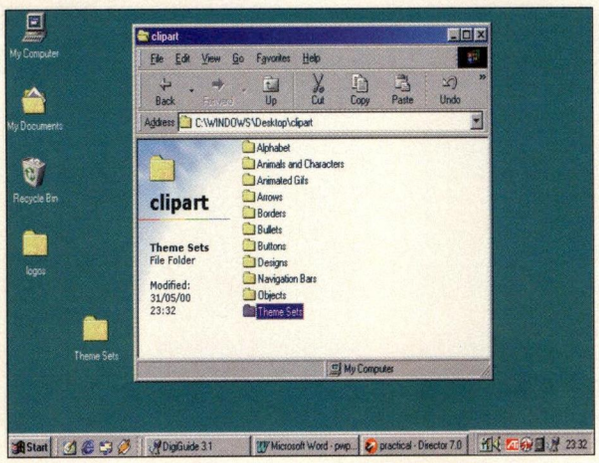


STEP 6 *If you'd like to use a more advanced tool to view the images, we'd recommend PaintShop Pro which is a handy grpahics pakage that you can use on your PC. You can download a trial version of this software from www.digitalworkshop.co.uk. Navigate through the software options. There are some great help files in this software which will help you to get started.*

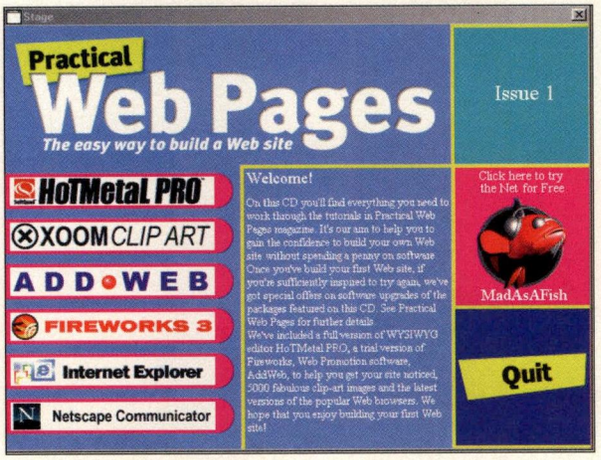
Special Offer

Web Clip Empire 150,000 features six CD-ROMs crammed with animated GIFs, Web graphics, music, sound effects and more. Readers of Practical Web Pages *can buy this package now for only £9.99. Alternatively, you can buy any three of Xoom's packages including the Web Clip Empire 150,000 and Web Templates 250 - a collection of Web site templates for only £29.97 and get a fourth package free. Visit www.xoom.net/pwp/pwp.htm now for more information and to upgrade. To buy any of these products you'll need a credit card and when asked, must quote the code PWP to get the special offer for readers of* Practical Web Pages.

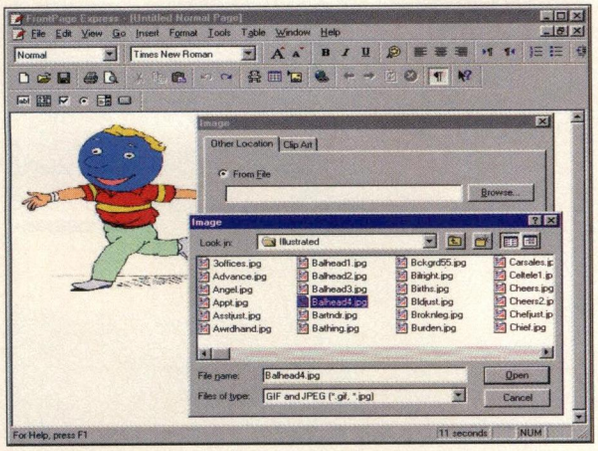
Practical Web Pages on the CD



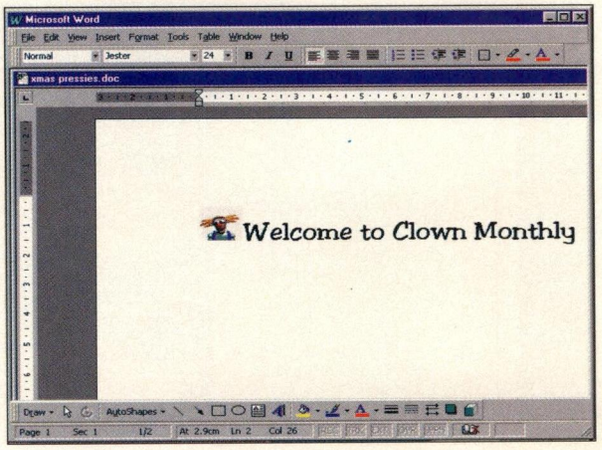
STEP 3 *In order to use the clip art on your Web pages, you'll first need to copy it to your computer's hard disc. Look through the choices within the clip art folders until you find the type of image or type face that you'd like to use on your site. Then all you need to do is to drag that folder, or the specific images onto your Windows desktop. From this position on your hard drive it's now ready for you to incorporate into your pages.*


Practical
Web Pages
The easy way to build a Web site
Issue 1
HoTMetaL PRO
XOOM CLIP ART
ADDOWEB
FIREWORKS 3
Internet Explorer
Netscape Communicator
Welcome!
On this CD you'll find everything you need to work through the tutorials in Practical Web Pages magazine. It's our aim to help you to gain the confidence to build your own Web site without spending a penny on software. Once you've build your first Web site, if you're sufficiently inspired to try again, we've got special offers on software upgrades of the packages featured on this CD. See Practical Web Pages for further details.
We've included a full version of WYSIWYG editor HoTMetaL PRO, a trial version of Fireworks, Web Promotion software, AddWeb, to help you get your site noticed, 5000 fabulous clip-art images and the latest versions of the popular Web browsers. We hope that you enjoy building your first Web site!
Click here to try the Net for Free
MadAsAFish
Quit

STEP 4 *To preview the clip art images you can use a Web browser. We've included Netscape Communicator and Internet Explorer on the* Practical Web Pages *cover CD. For instructions on how to install them, turn to page 6. Once they are installed you can follow the instructions for viewing the images in the browser of your choice. Here we show you how to do it with Internet Explorer. You'll have to insert the image into the code on your page for it to become a permanent part of your site.*



STEP 7 *To import a graphic into a Web page using FrontPage Express, just click on the picture button and type the name of the chosen graphic. If you can't remember what it is called, use the Browse button to find it, you can work through all the files on your hard drive using this. For information on how to insert an image into a HoTMetaL PRO Web page, take a look at our guide to HoTMetaL PRO on page 64.*



STEP 8 *For further information on how to use the clip art in a specific program, take a look at the manual which accompanies the specific software of your choice or at the on screen Help File for a section about Importing Graphics. If you can't find any relevant information with the package, start surfing. Take a look at the online help for the software, if any is available.* ■

Jargon Buster

Desktop
The display area of your computer's screen in which you can move files and folders around.

GIFs and JPEGs
GIFs and JPEGs are the image formats that are most commonly used on the Internet. GIFs only use 216 colours – less colour information means small files and quicker downloads. JPEGs have more colours, but are compressed, to make them as small as possible, and again, quick to download.

Creating a navigatio

In brief

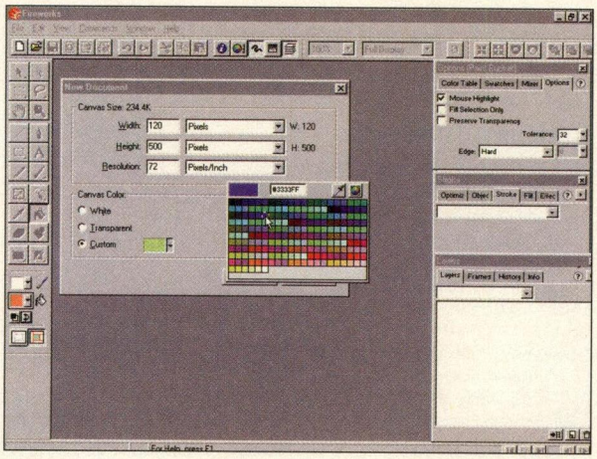
SOFTWARE: *Fireworks*

PROJECT: *Making a navigation button*

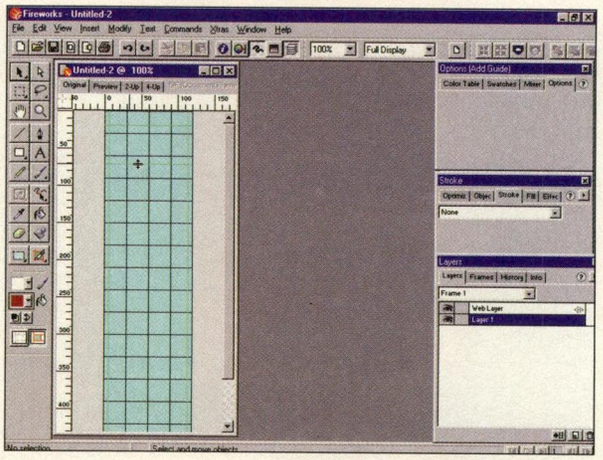
TIME: 1 hour

Find out how to make your site easy to use with well-designed navigation

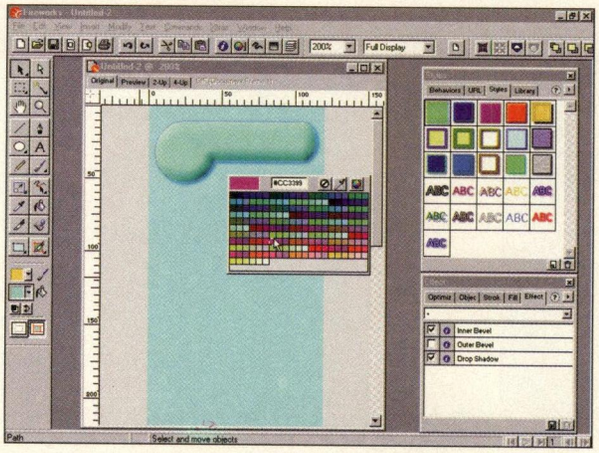
Now you've learnt how to put together a basic page you probably want to give your site some character. You can do this by livening up your Web site with a few fancy graphics. To do this you'll need a graphics package to create them. Fireworks is the chosen tool of the professional designer. At first sight Fireworks looks like a complicated program but you can still produce some very exciting results without too much effort. Fireworks is a well thought out program that incorporates many features to help the online designer produce eye-catching but also fast loading and effective graphics. One of the main problems when designing a Web site is knowing how to produce effective navigation buttons — ones that look interesting enough to click on. This where Fireworks comes into its own. It is packed with effects and tools to help you to produce all kinds of shapes, textures, shadows and 3D effects which will make your Web site buttons look irresistible and you don't have to be an expert to use it to its best effect.



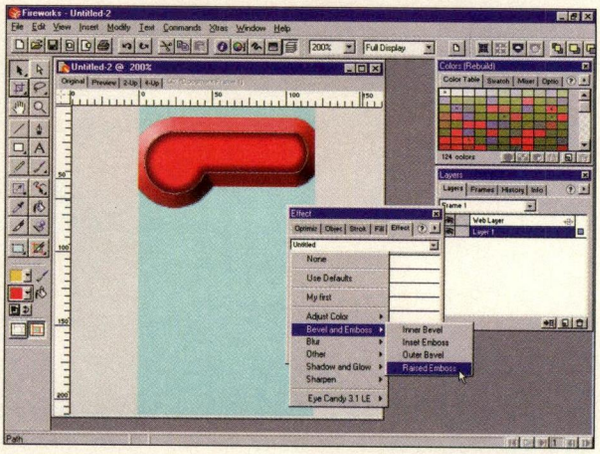
STEP 1 *Install Fireworks from the Practical Web Pages CD-ROM onto your PC. From the File menu click Open, this will open the New Document window. Type in the size you want your button to be and then can select a background colour. In the Canvas Color section select Custom, then either click the small coloured box which will let you choose any colour you like, or click the little icon next to it which will open a Web safe colour chart, select your colour and close the window.*



STEP 2 *To help you draw and place the graphics more accurately there is a background grid of equally spaced lines that you can use as a template. There are also Guides that you can drag from the rulers which are at the top and side of the canvas area. To do this you need to select the Pointer Tool which is the black arrow at the top of the Tool Bar. You can drag out as many guides as you like and build up a framework to build your button within.*



STEP 5 *Now your button is a single shape you can apply effects to it. Fireworks comes with a library of pre defined styles that can be added to any shape or you can create your own using any combinations of the tools. To open the styles library from the Windows menu select Styles. Click on any of the icons in this window and your shape will instantly be transformed. Try out a few.*



STEP 6 *To create custom effects for your button, select effect from the Window menu, in this window click on the pull down menu at the top. This will give you a few options all of which you can experiment with to get the effect you want. Combine as many effects as you like and when you create the effects you want you can save it for use on the other buttons by clicking the small square button at the bottom of the window.*

Hints & tips

Getting it right

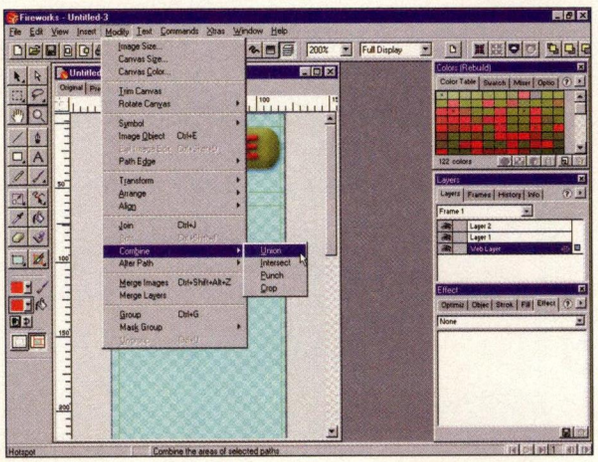
Fireworks comes with a multistage Undo menu which can be accessed from the Windows menu, just click back to where you want to go and it will undo your mistakes and make you feel more confident about experimenting.

Using colour

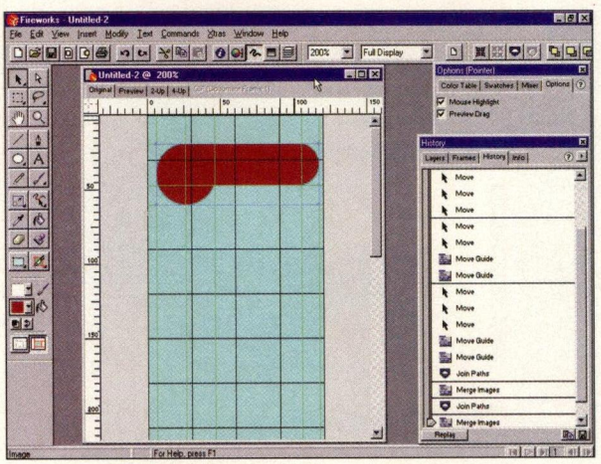
If you use Web safe colours then they will always look the same on everybody's browser and if you are tying to match the image colour to the background colour then no one will see the join.

n button

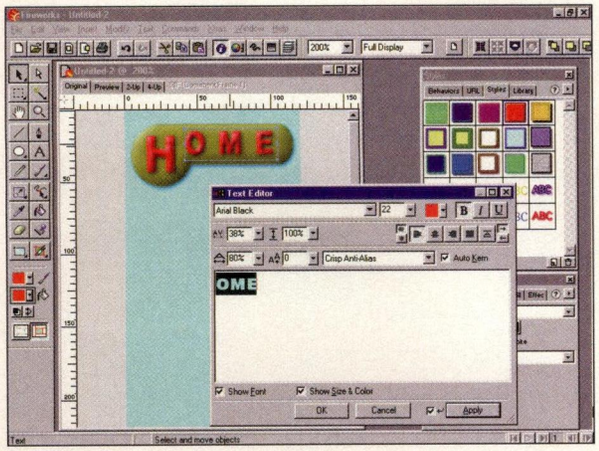
Practical Web Pages on the CD



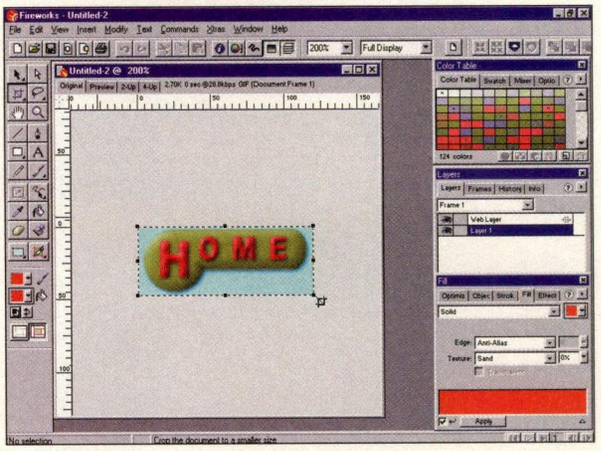
STEP 3 *Basic shapes can be created by using the Draw Shape tool, which is the small white square on the Tool bar. Click to select it or click and hold down the button on your mouse to select a different shape. With this tool you can drag out a shape on the canvas. It will automatically fill with the Fill Colour, which must be set by clicking the coloured square of the icon next to the Paint Bucket symbol at the bottom of the tool bar.*



STEP 4 *You can build up your button by using several different shapes which can overlap each other. With the Pointer tool selected you can click on any of the shapes, move them or even delete them by pressing the DEL key on your keyboard. In this way you can build up a complex shape. When you have created the shape you want you can combine all the shapes into one. Hold the Shift Key down and click each different shape in turn, then from the Modify menu select Combine > Union.*



STEP 7 *To add text to your button, select the Text tool by clicking the capital A button on the tool bar. Click in the centre of the button, this will open the Text window. Select the font, size and colour you want then type your text in the lower part of the window. You can re edit this at any time by double clicking on the text with the pointer tool. Create effects for the text using the same tools as you did for the background.*



STEP 8 *When you are happy with the shape and form of your button you can Trim off any unused background using the trim tool which you select by clicking and holding the dotted outline box icon below the selection tool on the tool bar. With this tool drag out a marquee tightly fitting around your button and press Enter on the Keyboard. Now save your button as a GIF by using the Export command from the File menu.*

Jargon Buster

Web colours
Web Safe Colours are based on 256 colours and shades of colours, using only these will make an image file size much smaller and the colours should look just as good on all computers.

GIFs and JPEGs
GIF is an image format that is limited to the web safe colours, it is a good format to use for graphics but for photographic images it is best to use the JPEG format.

In brief

SOFTWARE: *Fireworks*

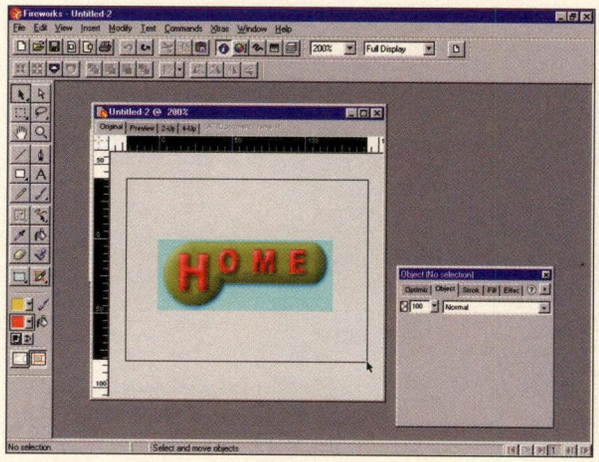
PROJECT: *Creating a rollover*

TIME: 1 hour

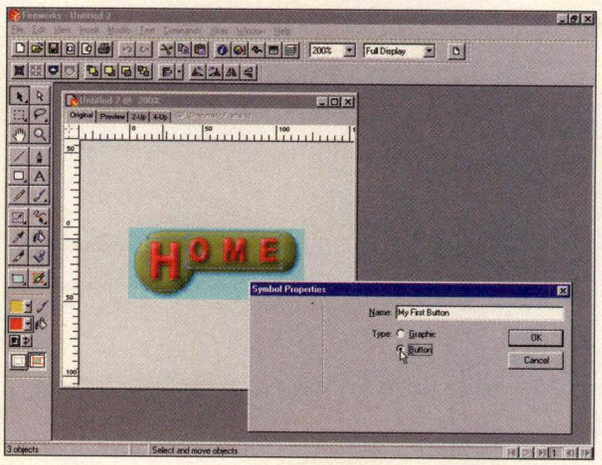
Creating a rollo

It's time to make your site interactive. With Fireworks we show you how...

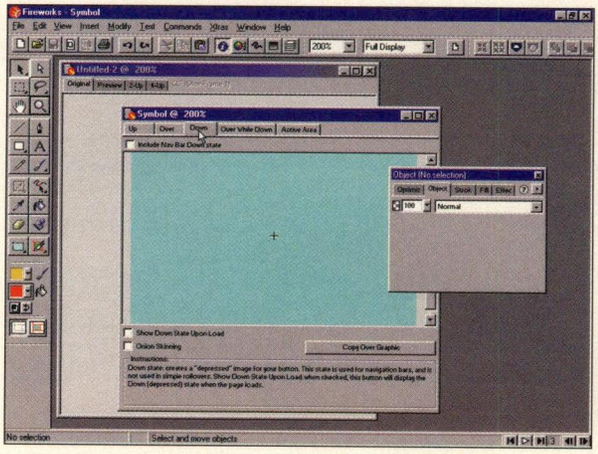
Apart from having a good design, one thing that can make a Web page stand out from the crowd is making your visitors feel they are really interacting with it. This can be achieved with quite subtle effects such as adding menu buttons that change when you move your mouse over them. This gives your visitors the impression that the links are live and that they might find something interesting if they click on them. A rollover works by the browser quickly swapping one image for another when the mouse passes over this gives the elusion of movement in a similar way to two frames in a movie. Fireworks has some handy tools to take the hard work out of creating rollover graphics and once you've made one image, making more is relatively straightforward.



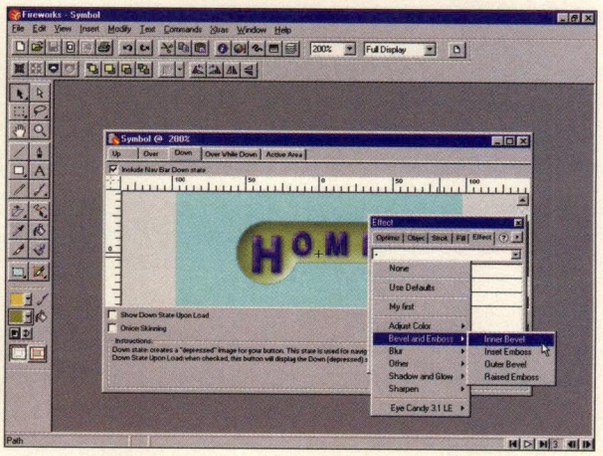
STEP 1 *Start Fireworks and open the button file you made on pages 46–47 (it should be listed at the bottom of the File menu and will end in .png). Now click on the Pointer tool at the top of the toolbar on the left. With this tool selected, and holding down the left button on your mouse, drag the cursor from the top-left-hand corner of the window to the bottom-right-hand corner of your image. This will select all the elements that make up your button.*



STEP 2 *Go to the Insert menu and select Convert To Symbol. This will open the Symbol Properties window. Under the Type section select Button. Once chosen your button will appear in the window. You can then give your button a name and click OK to close the window. Double-click on your image and you'll open the Symbol window. This is the mode you'll use to create all the spectacular rollover effects with the start point of your initial button.*



STEP 5 *There is another effect you can use on your Web page and that shows when the button has been clicked on. If you want to add this effect then select the third tab at the top marked Down. Again click the Copy Over Graphic button, this will copy the button from the previous tab window and any effects you have applied. For the Down effect you may want to make the button look indented.*



STEP 6 *Select the Button shape by clicking on it away from any text using the Pointer tool. Select Effect from the Window menu and in this window you can see all the effects that have been applied to your button. To make the button look indented, click on the white strip at the top of this window. This will bring up a menu, go to Bevel and Emboss. You should select Inner Bevel.*

Hints & tips

All about rollovers

Most rollovers you see on the Internet only have two states: the normal state and the one when the mouse is rolling over them. Fireworks lets you build in three states to include one for when the button has been clicked. This creates an extra graphic for each button so when your Web page loads into a browser it must download these extra images as well. This can slow down the loading of the page. If you don't want to have the clicked state of the button, you don't have to make one and Fireworks will only produce a two-state button.

Practical Web Pages on the CD

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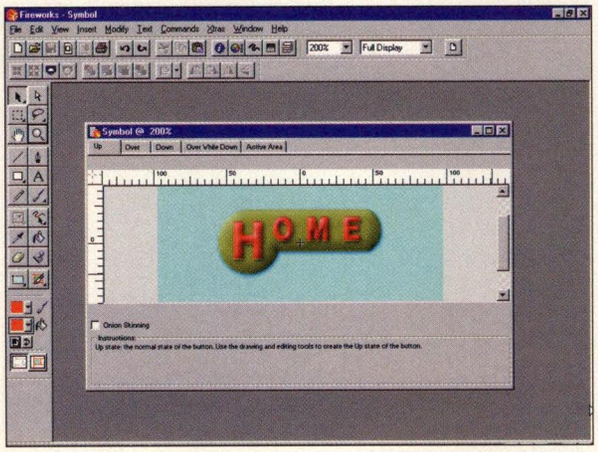
Jargon Buster

Bevel
A three-dimensional effect that looks as if an image has an angled edge to it.

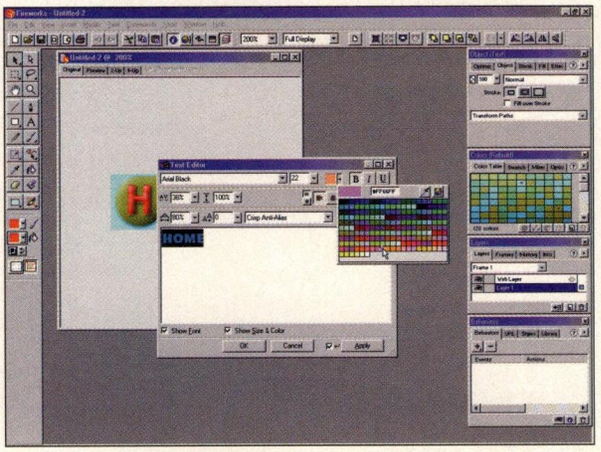
Emboss
An effect that makes your image look as if it has been stamped into a metal surface. It usually works well with text.

Pull-down menu
A type of menu that allows you to select an item as a part of a multiple selection.

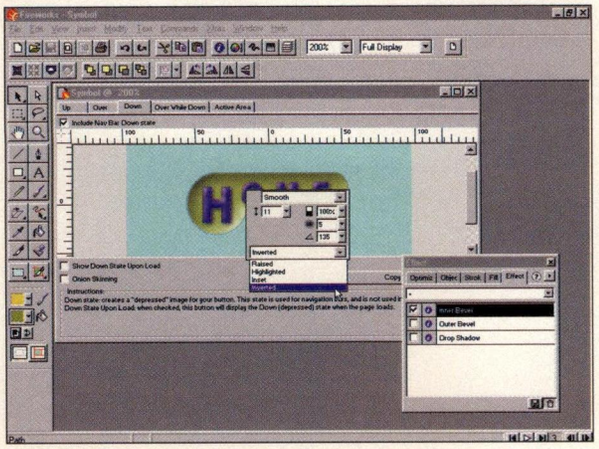
Tab
This is like a button except it is used to change from one window to another in the same part of a program – rather like A, B, or C cataloguing in an address book.



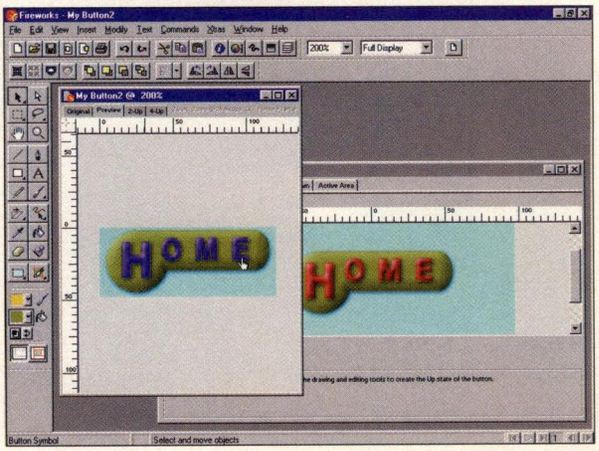
STEP 3 *Once you've selected this mode you'll see that along the top of this window are a series of tabs, the opening one shows the button without a rollover effect. To create a rollover effect, click the next tab along which is marked Over. This will open a blank window. Click the button marked Copy Up Graphic in the bottom of the window and your original button should appear. You may want a subtle rollover effect such as a change of the colour to the text.*



STEP 4 *Double-click on the text part of the button to open the Text Editor window. The text on your button should appear at the bottom. Make sure it is all selected by dragging the mouse over it. Click on the little button next to the small coloured square at the top of this window, this will open the Web safe colour chooser. From the colour selection Select the colour you want and click OK. Look back at your text and it should now have changed colour.*



STEP 7 *This will pop up a little window to let you adjust the effect. Go to the pull-down menu at the bottom, select Inverted and then select Smooth from the top menu. Click the image background to close this window. You've added a pushed-down effect to your button. If you had already used the Inner Bevel effect on your original button just double-click where it is listed in the Effects window to open the same pop-up window.*



STEP 8 *You have now created a three-stage rollover button. To see what it looks like you can move, or close the Symbol window and click the Preview tag at the top of your main project window. This will build a preview for you so you can roll your mouse over the button and click it to see how it looks in action. You can also get a preview in your Web browser by selecting Preview in Browser from the File menu.*

In brief

SOFTWARE:
Fireworks

PROJECT:
Making a menu

TIME: 45 minutes

Making a menu

We're going to show you how to turn your button into a complete menu

You now have a single button that changes when the mouse rolls over it and also when it is clicked on, but one button does not make a menu. Instead of building each button from scratch, Fireworks has some neat tricks that allow you to duplicate your one button into a whole menu with all the associated effects. You can then readjust each of your new buttons to make them look different and then add a hyperlink to each one to where you want it to link to. Making the buttons appear to roll over and depress when they are on your Web page is also quite complicated. Don't worry if all of this sound a little bit too complicated because Fireworks can do it all for you. It will even write the code into a basic Web page ready for you to add your own content.

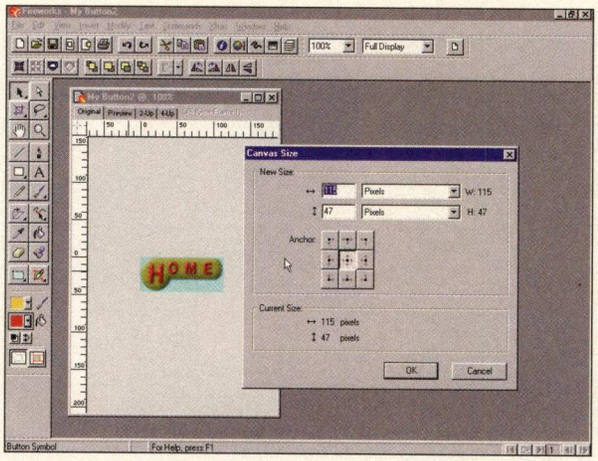
Hints & tips

Keeping things organised

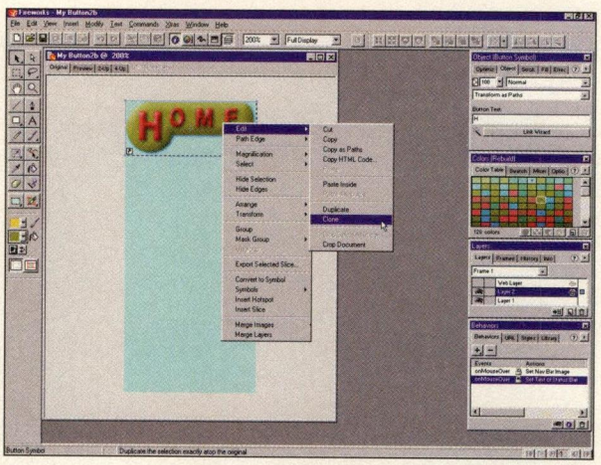
When you are building a Web site remember to organise the different elements into different folders so that you keep all your graphics and images in a separate folder to the HTML pages. It is always best to start the way you intend to continue, because as your site grows so does the number of associated files.

Looking good

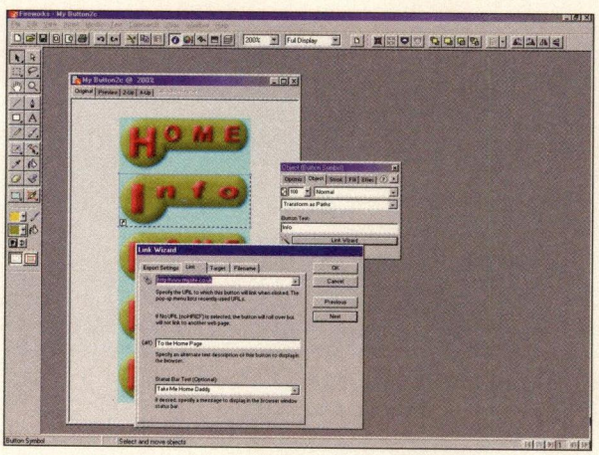
Before you start duplicating your button to create your menu, make sure it is exactly the way you want it too look because at this stage you can still easily change anything you want by using the different tools.



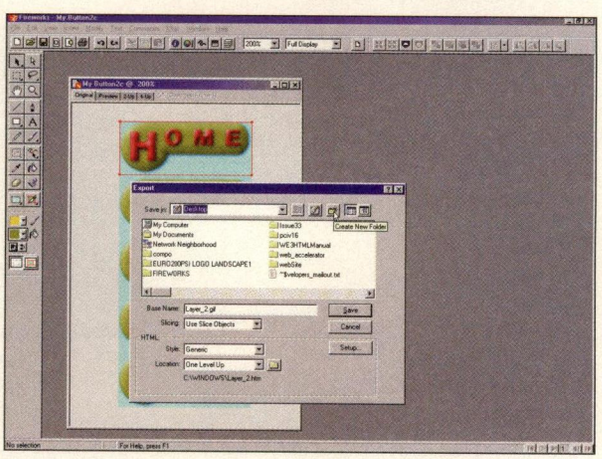
STEP 1 *Open your Button project. If you wish to make a menu you will need a larger background than you have for the single button. From the Modify menu select Canvas size. In this window it will give you the current size of the whole image including the background. You do not need to change the Width setting but you will want to reset the Height to match the size you want your menu to be. Click the middle box at the top in the Anchor section and click OK.*



STEP 2 *With the pointer tool selected from the tool bar on the left, click on your button to select it. Then Right click over the button, this will produce a short menu, select Edit then Clone. This will have duplicated your button on top of the original, you may not see it but if you click on your button and drag it into a new position you will see there is an identical one underneath. You can repeat this process until you have built up a complete menu.*

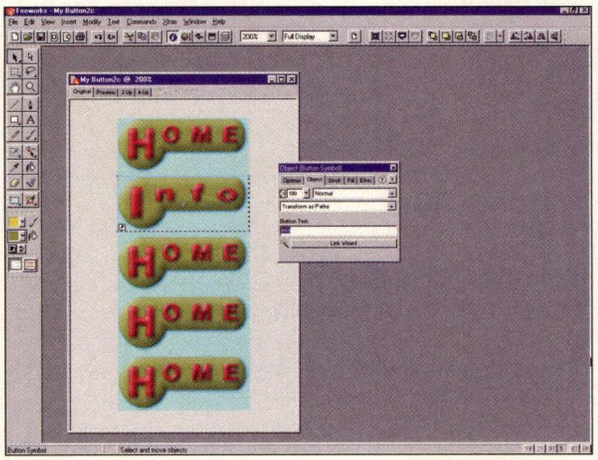


STEP 5 *In the same window you can also add some ALT text, these are the words that shows up while your image is waiting to load. For a button it is a good idea to say where it will link to when you click it. There is also another box that lets you type in some text that will cleverly appear in the Status bar at the bottom of a browser window when the mouse rolls over the link, this would usually display the URL of a link but instead you can write a message.*

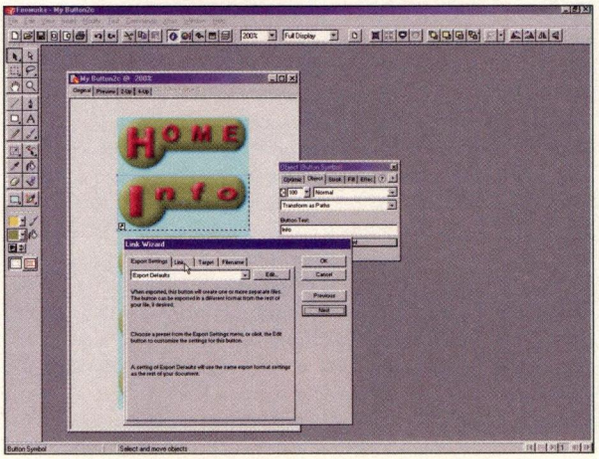


STEP 6 *To make these button effects work on your Web page you need some complicated JAVA Script coding. However, don't worry, it's not really difficult as Fireworks writes all the code you need and produces a fully working HTML page along with all the graphics. To produce your finished page select Export from the File menu. This will open the Export window. The first thing to do in this window is choose a folder to save the HTML and images into.*

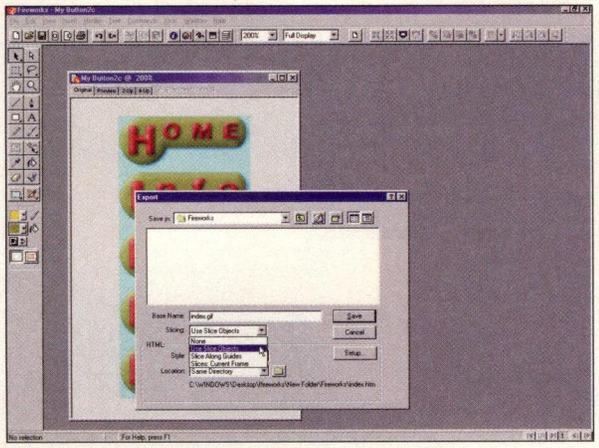
Practical Web Pages on the CD



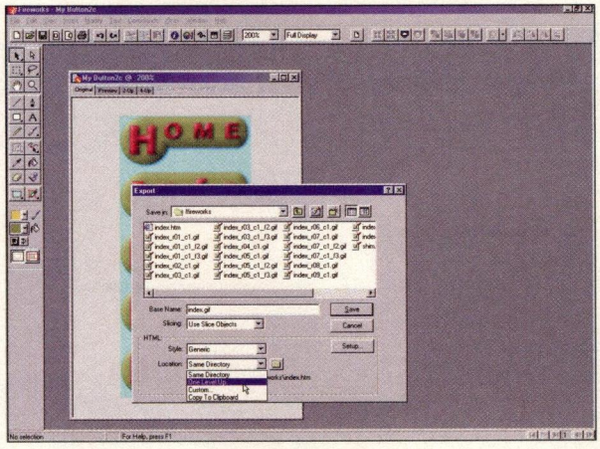
STEP 3 *You now have a menu of identical buttons that need to be customised. From the Window menu select Object, this will open the Object window. Back in the main window click on one of your buttons, in the Object window the text that is written on the button will appear in the Button Text box. To change it, just delete it and type in your new text. When you click another button the results will automatically appear.*



STEP 4 *When you have finished all the buttons, you need to add hyperlinks to them. Click on one of your buttons to select it, then click on the Link Wizard button at the bottom of the Object window. In the Link Wizard window click the Link tab at the top. In the first field you can in type your link, this can either be to another page on the same site such as home.html or a link to another site, for this you must include the full address including the http:// bit.*



STEP 7 *Next, in the base name box you can put in a name that you want your page and associated graphics to be called such as index. Next go to the Slicing pull down menu and select Use Slice Objects. In the HTML section select Generic as style unless the HTML editor you are going to use is listed. For Location, if you have created a folder just for the graphics select One Level Up to save the HTML page outside the graphics folder, otherwise select Same Directory.*



STEP 8 *You can now preview your work properly in a browser and make sure your rollovers work. However before you have a complete Web page you will want to add some content, this will have to be done by importing your page into an HTML editor. There are also instructions within the HTML page that tell you where to paste the code to if you wish to add it to an already existing page. You can only read this by selecting the Source view in your editor.* ■

Jargon Buster

URL (Universal Resource Locator)
The jargon for the address of a Web site. Full URLs always starts with http:// before the www. You don't usually have to type this bit in when you use a browser but you always need it when you create links on a Web page.

JavaScript
A programming language that can work alongside HTML in a Web page and can add extra functionality such as rollovers, clocks and pop up windows.

Hyperlink
A link from one Web page to another or another site.

In brief

SOFTWARE:
AddWeb SE 2.61

DEVELOPED BY:
Cyberscape HQ

ON TH WEB:
www.cyber-spacehq.com

PRICE:
AddWeb 2.6 previously sold for $49 (about £30)

SYSTEM:
Windows 95, 98 or NT

Promoting your

Submit your creation to hundreds of search engines with this award-winning site-promotion tool

AddWeb SE 2.61

Promoting your Web site is as important as designing interesting pages. You've spend hours putting it together and are rightfully proud of your achievement. It's important that other people can benefit from your hard work. Whether your site is for your own personal use or a small business venture the next stage is to make sure that it gets noticed in all the right places. Thankfully, you can attract a lot of attention simply by submitting your site to search engines. When the Internet first became popular there were only a few key search engines to make sure you had a presence on. However as the Internet has grown and more and more sites appear daily, there's a multitude of search engines covering every subject imaginable. Posting your site to these sites also used to be quite simple, but as you can imagine, with thousands of search engines that you could approach it's not always easy to know which ones to target and secondly it's a lengthy process. Posting your site is a fairly obvious solution, you'll agree, but with over 2,500 search engines covering the Internet, submitting your site manually to even a small percentage of them is a task of monumental proportions, if you consider that submitting a single entry manually could take a couple of minutes. And to make an indent you really need to submit your site to a significant number of search engines. To make things worse, you really ought to update your profile regularly as your Web site evolves—and to be sure of keeping ahead of the game—that's probably weekly.

The solution is to automate the procedure, reducing the effort involved. This is where AddWeb comes in. It simplifies Web site submission, enabling you to enter your Web site details and submit them to hundreds of Internet search engines in a one-off batch process, cutting out all the hours you'd spend soullessly processing submissions if you decided to take the job on manually.

Battle tactics

Before you use AddWeb, it's worth sitting down and working out a strategy for submitting your site to search engines. The idea is to make best use of the data fields used by the search engines to decide what your site is purveying. There's more to submitting your site than simply telling people where it is. Search engines work by identifying keywords. They track those words as surfers request them. So it's important that the ones you choose to identify your site are poignant and likely to be the ones chosen when someone is looking for a site like yours. Make sure you've something that people will want to see.

Eighteen keyword fields are available within the Site Data menu of AddWeb. These are used by many search engines to list your site (or not) when searchers enter keywords describing the subject they're interested in. If your keywords are too general, you'll be listed even when your site isn't relevant. If they are too specific, few people will ever see your site.

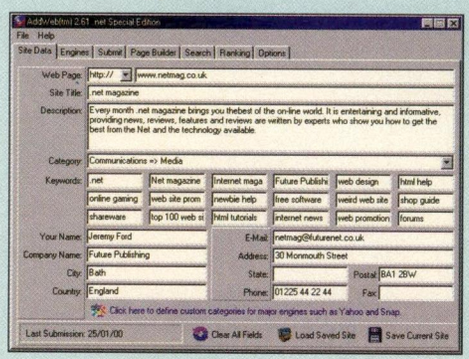
Draw up a list of all the keywords that might be used to describe your Web site and try them on a couple of search engines

Hints & tips

Increase your hits

Try the following sites for further advice about promoting your site:
http://promotionworld.com
http://searchenginewatch.com
www.sitelaunch.net
www.cyberspacehq.com/addweb/tips.htm

Submit your site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File Help
Site Data | Engines | Submit | Page Builder | Search | Ranking | Options
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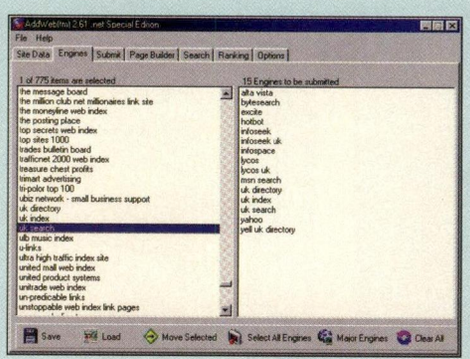
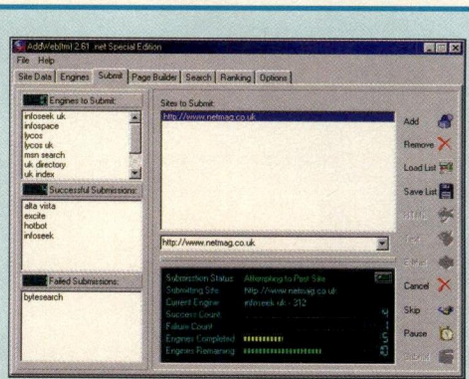
Country: England
Phone: 01225 44 22 44
Fax:
Click here to define custom categories for major engines such as Yahoo and Snap.
Last Submission: 25/01/00
Clear All Fields
Load Saved Site
Save Current Site

1 *Use this window to enter the details to be submitted to search engines. Information entered under Description is displayed in the list of search-engine results. Keywords are words that describe your site. Prioritise the keywords in order of relevance, because many engines do not read all of them. You can save details for several Web sites using the Save and Load buttons.*



2 *Use the Engine's menu to select search engines. This version of AddWeb supports 775 of them, but you will not need to submit your site to every engine on the list. You are able to chhose the ones you want. Just scroll down the extensive list and double-click on your chosen targets. Use the Save and Load buttons to store and retrieve lists you want to keep a record of.*



3 *Now you are ready to submit your Web site to the search engines. The Site to Submit panel lists the Web sites you are submitting. If you have several Web sites, you can combine the submissions. The other panels display the procedure's progress. Click Submit! when you are ready and wait while the program goes off and does all the hard work.*

Web site

in the first instance, see what types of site appear. Are they anything like yours? You can whittle down the list by eliminating keywords that produce obscure results and keeping the ones that list sites similar to yours.

The next stage is to ensure your Web ranking is as high as possible within a search. If you appear below 50 or more other sites, you won't get many hits.

You can improve your ranking by employing meta tags. These attach information to the home page of your site, without making it visible to visitors. This information is used by certain search engines to bring the most relevant search results to the top of the list.

Again, keywords are the key (sorry). AddWeb transfers the keywords entered in the Site Data menu to the Page Builder menu, then generates a home page containing the meta tag details—these are your keywords that you should tag into your page's code. You'll need to upload this page to your site and make it your home page. Normal visitors won't see it, though, because they're immediately and transparently transferred to the page you've specified as your main page.

Follow the instructions below and use the documentation supplied with the software (found in the Help menu) to get the most out of AddWeb's advanced submission features. ■

Upgrade to AddWeb 3

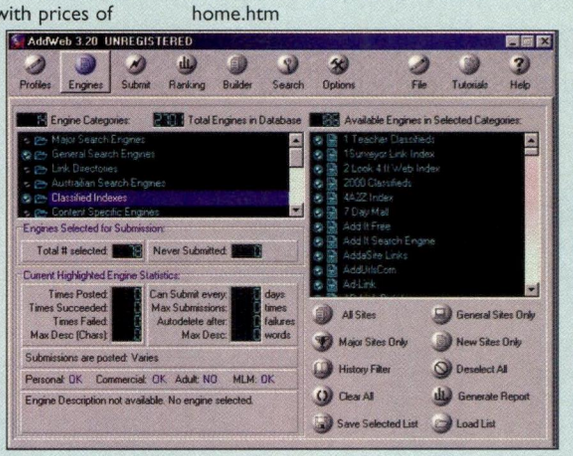
Over 100 new features have been included in AddWeb 3. You can see for yourself by installing the trial version from this month's CD. Additions include:

- Free search-engine database updates
- Up to 6,000 per cent faster submissions
- Comprehensive reporting
- Automated rule-checking system
- Over 2,700 search engines
- Enhanced ranking and page builder
- Dynamic database and software updates

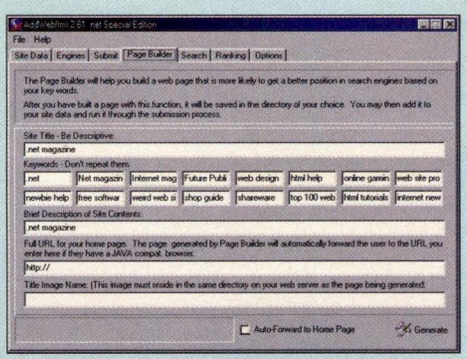
Readers can save $10 (about £6) on all versions of AddWeb 3, with prices of

- Standard $49 (£30)
- Gold $89 (£54)
- Pro $139 (£85)

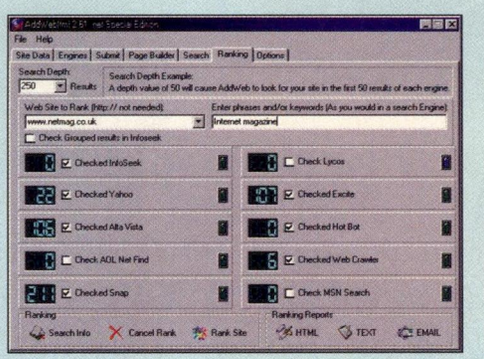
To order your upgrade, call Cyberspace HQ in the US on Tel: 001 818 593 4900. Make sure you mention the upgrade offer to get your special discount. Alternatively order via the Cyberspace HQ secure ordering Web site at http://secure.cyberhq.com/orders/netmag/home.htm



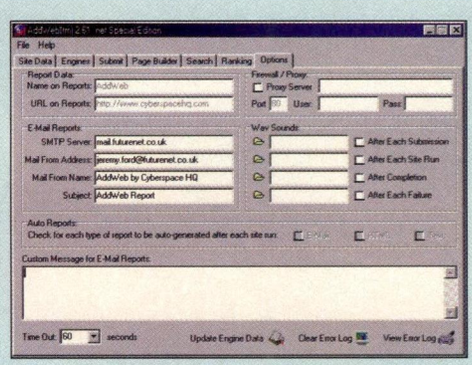
AddWeb can make submissions of your site to search engines seem like a piece of cake



4 ***AddWeb's Page Builder helps you generate a Web page designed to boost your search-engine ratings through the use of meta tags and other HTML code. Fill out the data on this page and click Generate. Once a page has been generated, put it in your Web-page directory on your Web server. Use the full URL for that page in an AddWeb submission run.***



5 ***You can check your current Web-site ranking on 10 of the most popular search engines using AddWeb's Ranking feature. Enter a word or phrase you used in your site data or meta tag keywords and click Rank Site. It takes a couple of minutes to find out how well you will fare during a search. Ranking reports can be saved for reference for later or e-mailed.***



6 ***If you are working behind a firewall, you may need to enter your proxy-server information into the Options window to make AddWeb function correctly. If you intend to send e-mail reports of ranking results, be sure to enter your details here too. The Update Engine Data feature is not available in this special edition of the software.***

THE INTERNET MAGAZINE

.net

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OUR EXPERT WEB DESIGNER EXPLAINS HOW TO BUILD A SITE THAT PEOPLE WILL WANT TO RETURN TO TIME AND AGAIN

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Future Publishing
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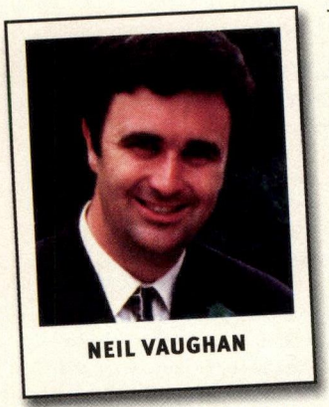
THE GALLERY

It's amazing what you can do with a little know-how and a lot of passion. Practical Web Pages shows how a passion for sport can be turned into a successful Web site

A relative old-timer by Internet standards, Neil got his Web site online in 1996, and it has gone through many re-designs since. This has been good practice for Neil, who is hoping to get into Web development as a full-time career.

He first saw the Internet in the USA, and, impressed with its capabilities and the services it could provide, decided to jump on board, designing a site dedicated to Tottenham Hotspur FC.



NEIL VAUGHAN

Neil Vaughan's professional site dedicated to his favourite footy club: Tottenham Hotspur

"I wanted to provide an information service for Spurs fans from Chigwell to Beijing – a place where the fans could express their views, and where I could give detailed information on the team. One of my aims was to make this information easy to find, but, most importantly, easy to use.

"To create SpursWeb I used Microsoft FrontPage 98, with Notepad to tidy up some of the coding. I used Adobe Photoshop for the graphics, and Macromedia Flash for the interactive game. For hardware, I used a Pentium II 350MHz computer. The latest re-design took me three months in total to develop and put into practice.

"So far the response to the Web site has been overwhelming," says Neil. "I've had positive feedback from Spurs fans from all over the world, and that gives me a great deal of satisfaction.

"I think the Internet is the ultimate resource for locating information and will soon become a part of our everyday lives." ■

We all had doubts about the Internet before we got hooked on it, and Dave Quinn is no exception. But while staying with friends in New York during the summer of 1998 he was struck by the buzz of excitement generated by the Internet, and decided to buy some 'how-to' magazines to get himself started.

After cutting his teeth on a charity Web site, Dave turned his attention back to his first love, Judo, and after finding a suitable domain name for his Web site, www.Worldjudo.org was born.

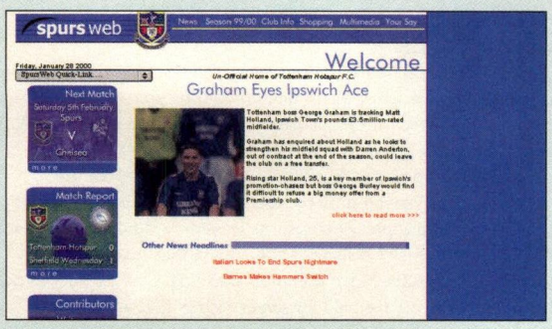
The ex-Southern England Judo Champion (so don't mess with him) got the site online in August last year. "It took me three months of planning and 1,500 photos. I then decided to add a database of clubs and players from all over the world, and from that moment on I realised the enormity involved. I now spend about four hours a day working on or with the Internet.

DAVE QUINN

Dave Quinn is a judo enthusiast who has thrown his weight into creating a competitive resource for judo fans

"I chose FrontPage 98 to produce my Web site as I wanted to avoid having to learn too much technical stuff. For hardware I used a Pentium II 300MHz. So far, the response to the site has been phenomenal. I love to promote this fantastic sport all over the world, and I now help other judo clubs and charities to set up their first homepage for free.

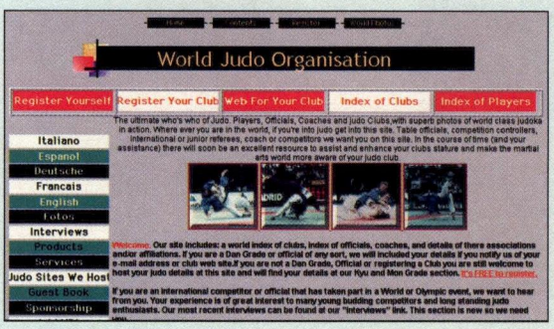
"Used wisely, I think the Internet is a gold mine of information, and I'll definitely be keeping my eyes peeled for the high-quality tips and assistance that you can get online. I prefer to buy magazines rather than books for Internet advice, as magazines are often much more up to date." ■



SPURSWEB

http://members.aol.com/neilv1/index.html

Neil has spent a lot of time designing his site, and the effort he has put in certainly shows. It's easy to navigate, and has numerous detailed pages covering many aspects of the club, from the latest match report to the 'Punch a Gunner' interactive game. Its best feature is a quick-link chooser panel, which means you can access any page on the site in an instant – no more wading through page after page. If only every site had this simple and efficient facility.



WORLD JUDO

www.Worldjudo.org

If you're into Judo, get into this site. It's a huge resource and is available in French, Italian, Spanish and German. There are some interesting links, photos, and interviews with the stars and a list of Judo clubs around the world, including email details.

The site could benefit from some minor refinements, just to make everything load up a little quicker, but on the whole it's a great site for Judo enthusiasts.

Money for nothing, banners for all

You've got a Web site that you're proud of, visitors love it, and the hits are rolling in. So why not make a bit of cash out of it? Dave Taylor looks at banner advertising

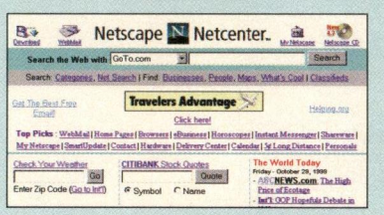
Money. Cash. Dough. Moolah. However you put it, it's better to have some than not. And a lot of people get involved in Web sites because they think it's a quick way to make a buck. In reality, nothing could be further from the truth. However, if you've been following our tutorials carefully you may even have a respectable Web site that's doing pretty well. But how do you turn that success into cold hard cash?

You can actually make money from your Web site by promoting somebody else's goods. So, for example, if your site is dedicated to strategy games, you could link to a software reseller's page that sells the games you're talking about. Then, if someone reads your pages and decides to buy the game from your partner, you get a cut of the profit from that sale.

However, there is another way to make money and that's by selling your soul and allowing a company to put banner ads on your pages. Within seconds, you can become a corporate shill, your Web site transformed from a blazing example of amateur creativity into a money-grabbing waste of cyberspace. Okay, maybe that's extreme, but before you head down this route, be aware that some people will see your inclusion of banner ads in this light. There is a lot of passion about this subject and if you've built up a following based on pure amateurism (ignoring its pejorative overtones), then some may see it as selling out.

Most casual surfers don't mind banners, though, and why should they? They help to pay for people's time so that more effort can be put into building a site you like. When slower connections were the norm, an additional 6K on a page was an understandable concern, but with 56Kbps modems largely adopted now, it doesn't seem such a big deal.

Do I get a say?



You're probably thinking that everything seems to be stacked in the favour of the company that sells the advertising, and you're right. However many of the companies give you some flexibility. They may only require the banners to be displayed in the top third of the page. You may also get a say in the type of advertising displayed on your site, so you can target your typical reader.

NO VALUE AT ALL

Most advertising companies have three problems with a page like this. First, porn is shunned by companies that want a clean image. Second, it is automatically spawned by JavaScript, and third, it has no valuable editorial content.

Even the best-known Web sites carry advertising these days. It's only one avenue of revenue for them, though.

ONLINE MAGAZINE, SPIKE

(www.spikemagazine.com) combines associate advertising from the network and SAFE Audit with the Amazon affiliate scheme, but doesn't allow them to take over the site. Best of both worlds.

1,000 visitors = £1,000?

Not quite. Joining a scheme for banner ads is relatively easy. There are several companies that specialise in selling banner advertising. They don't sell advertising to appear on their own sites; instead, they sell ads to appear on sites that join their affiliate schemes. When you sign up, the company takes your details and gives you some HTML code (the basic programming language for designing Web pages) to insert in your pages. This code calls a banner from its server into your page. The company tracks the sites that display each banner and logs the number of people who clicked on a banner on your page.

However, the schemes differ widely and not just in the amounts they pay. There are strict terms and conditions you must adhere to and the way in which they calculate your share may differ also. As with anything you agree to, reading the small print is essential.

Some companies pay you simply to display an ad, so the number of pages viewed directly equates to the amount of money you receive. The pay-per-view rate, as it were, will be extremely low, though, because it isn't displaying the advert that matters to a company – it's results. More common these days are pay-per-click schemes, where you are paid for every visitor that actually pursues a banner by clicking on it.

The more unscrupulous of you might be thinking, "Ah, a little bit of JavaScript (a programming language for more advanced Web pages), and Bob's your sister's husband, automatic click-throughs." But remember that small print – it almost certainly stipulates that you cannot increase your display rate by spawning new windows automatically using JavaScript, so having a new banner page open when the user leaves your site or closes their browser disqualifies you. As well as banning the use of JavaScript or any other automatic means of following banner links, companies may disallow you from

using non-standard means of encouraging users to click on banners. Basically this means you can't do things such as display an ad and then put your own code underneath saying, "Please click on this ad, because I get paid and I'm a poor student."

'Free crackz, warez and porn'

Usually the first thing the company insists on is that your site is legal. It cannot breach copyright or any other law. As a rule of thumb, your site cannot contain any offensive or pornographic material. Unless the advertising company specialises in it, they tend not to want to be associated with adult material or illegal MP3 files. So make sure your site contains no music you didn't create yourself, illegal software, software cracks or registration codes, and no pictures or text that you have taken from other sites without permission (and you may need proof of that permission to convince the company). It isn't exactly rocket science – just common sense you should be applying anyway.

The other things that schemes tend to stipulate are that you have a minimum number of hits per month, because they don't deal with very small sites. They only pay out when your account reaches a minimum value, so you probably have to get up to $50 (it's almost always dollars) before they send you a cheque. The good news is that most companies roll over your credits, month to month, until you make the threshold.

The company will stipulate that you place the code exactly where they say in your pages – normally right at the top or bottom – and you cannot tamper with or alter the position or code. They do this for several reasons. The first is that they believe this will get the best response, and they want the best response because that's how they make the most money – not too much of a problem, because it's how you make the most money too. They also do it so they have a uniform model they can sell to companies: "We display x million banner ads per day and every single one is displayed at the top of the page. The first thing x million visitors are going to see is your ad."

Finally, conditions state that the banners must be displayed on pages that contain editorial copy. You can't just have pages full of banner ads. Again, this is to lend some level of quality to the service and also to stop the system spiralling out of control. It may be possible for your page to contain ads from other companies, but there will probably be a limit as to how many.

The problem with banners from other companies is that if you try to join more than one scheme, hoping to make extra cash, both companies will insist their ad has to be the top one. However, you could be a member of an ad banner scheme and an associate scheme for flogging books on your subject, for example, which works well for small players simply wanting to be a part of things.

Is it worth the hassle?

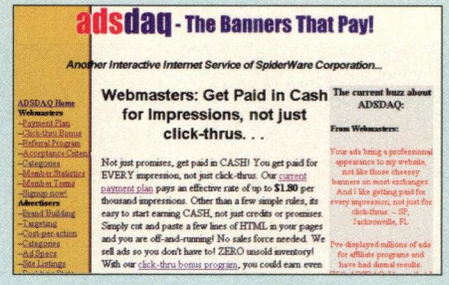
At this point, you're probably wondering if it is worth it. Well, it can be. As long as you're a sensible Web master, these schemes can make you some money for just a few minutes' work. It's not something that everyone wants to do but can bring you a steady little income that you can use to some effect at a later date. Once you've inserted the code into your pages, you can concentrate on working on your site and let the money roll in. If you stick to a single or double (top and bottom only) banner ad, most visitors to your site won't consider this a lowering of quality, and you can still make judicious use of associate schemes in a non-intrusive manner especially if you only choose the ones that are relevant to the content on your ow site.

You aren't going to earn a fortune with banner ads, unless your site has incredibly high traffic – for which read 'millions of hits per month' – and at that point you'll probably want to sell ads directly through a direct sales channel. In the meantime, however, you might earn enough for that CD you were after or a couple of books or a piece of software... ■

Banner specialists

There are several companies that specialise in selling banners on your pages. Further details can be found on sites that list associate schemes, such as www.associateprograms.co.uk and www.simplesite.co.uk Here's a selection of the companies that are happy to deal with UK sites. Most pay in dollars.

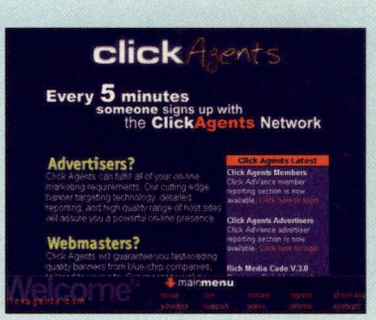
ADSDAQ
www.adsdaq.com
No minimum page impressions. Rates start at 25 cents per thousand banners displayed. Bonuses paid on click-throughs. Must accrue $10 before payment is made. Also pays for sites you refer to them.


adsdaq - The Banners That Pay!
Another Interactive Internet Service of SpiderWare Corporation...
Webmasters: Get Paid in Cash for Impressions, not just click-thrus. . .
The current buzz about ADSDAQ:

BANNER BROKERS
www.bannerbrokers.com
Requires at least 1,000 page views per day. Rates start at 10 cents per click, average 12 cents per click and go up to 20 cents per click. Accounts must accrue $25, but a non-refundable $10 application fee is required.

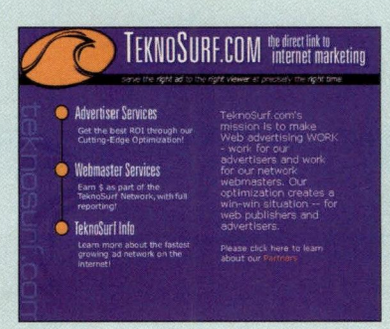
BANNER BROKERS
IF YOU CAN CLICK IT
WE CAN TRACK IT
OFFERING 20¢ PER UNIQUE
CASH IN ON YOUR QUALITY TRAFFIC
MARKET YOUR PRODUCTS/SERVICES

CLICK AGENTS
www.clickagents.com
Requires at least 3,000 page views per month. Rates start at 10 cents per click with premium rates from 12 cents to 20 cents for sites that get more than 30,000 page views per month. Must accrue $50 before payment is made. Account amounts are rolled over until minimum is reached. Also pays for sites you refer to them.



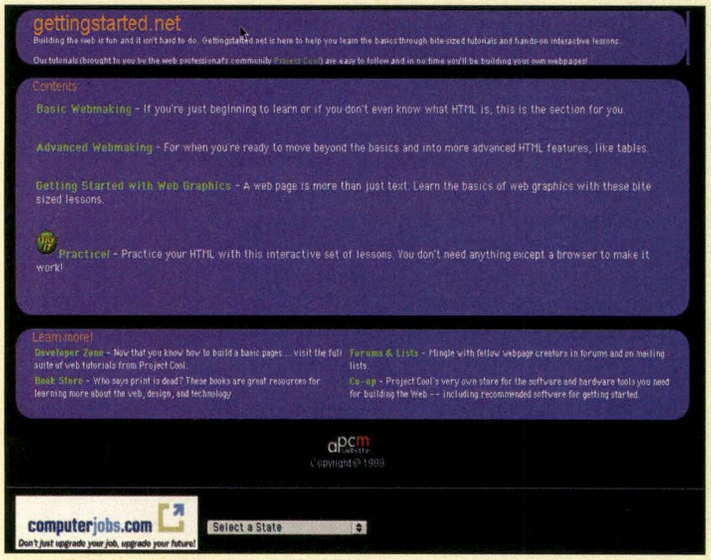
MAXIMUM PC NETWORK
www.maximumpc.co.uk/guides/joinnetwork.asp
Run by Future Publishing, this scheme is careful about members, so you will have to show a high-quality site with respectable traffic. The commission is generous, though: you get 50 per cent of the revenue from advertising displayed. Must accrue £10 before payment is made.

TEKNOSURF
www.teknosurf.com
Rates from 16 cents to 25 cents per click. Must accrue $25 before payment is made. Account amounts are rolled over until minimum is reached. Can be used on as many or as few pages as you want, so you can just use it for unsold inventory – pages you haven't managed to sell ads on to.



Resources

If you're keen to learn more about building your own Web site, there's a wealth of information online. Here are some of the better sites...


gettingstarted.net
Building the web is fun and it isn't hard to do. Gettingstarted.net is here to help you learn the basics through bite-sized tutorials and hands-on interactive lessons.
Our tutorials (brought to you by the web professional's community Project Cool) are easy to follow and in no time you'll be building your own webpages!
Contents:
Basic Webmaking - If you're just beginning to learn or if you don't even know what HTML is, this is the section for you.
Advanced Webmaking - For when you're ready to move beyond the basics and into more advanced HTML features, like tables.
Getting Started with Web Graphics - A web page is more than just text. Learn the basics of web graphics with these bite sized lessons.
Practice! - Practice your HTML with this interactive set of lessons. You don't need anything except a browser to make it work!
Learn more!
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Forums & Lists - Mingle with fellow webpage creators in forums and on mailing lists.
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Co-op - Project Cool's very own store for the software and hardware tools you need for building the Web -- including recommended software for getting started.
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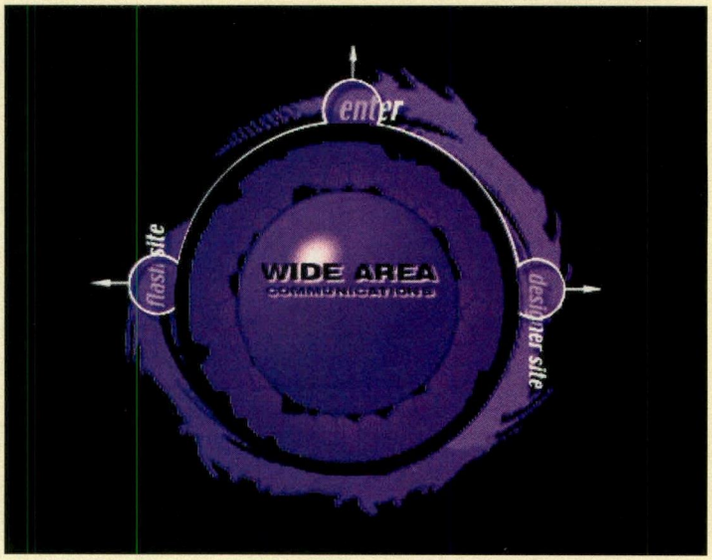
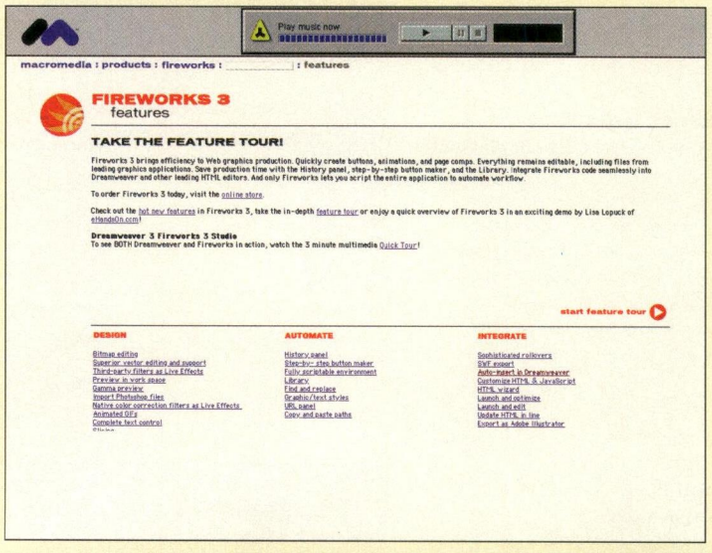
GETTING STARTED www.gettingstarted.net

If you have just started to create your own Web site, then of course you'll have checked out the Web Builder section of .net's Web site at www.netmag.co.uk/webbuilder If that doesn't sate your needs, then Getting Started has sections for all levels. HTML tutorials tend to throw you in at the deep end, but with some knowledge you'll swim through with little effort.



.DESIGNER www.widearea.co.uk/designer

Do you look at other people's Web sites and wonder how they manage to fill them with graphics and interactivity, yet they still load quicker than your relatively plain home page? Find out about creating graphics for the Web at .designer, which looks at how to effectively compress images and how to use JavaScript to make your graphics interactive.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features
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Fireworks 3 brings efficiency to Web graphics production. Quickly create buttons, animations, and page comps. Everything remains editable, including files from leading graphics applications. Save production time with the History panel, step-by-step button maker, and the Library. Integrate Fireworks code seamlessly into Dreamweaver and other leading HTML editors. And only Fireworks lets you script the entire application to automate workflow.
To order Fireworks 3 today, visit the online store.
Check out the hot new features in Fireworks 3, take the in-depth feature tour or enjoy a quick overview of Fireworks 3 in an exciting demo by Lisa Lopuck of eHandOn.com!
Dreamweaver 3 Fireworks 3 Studio
To see BOTH Dreamweaver and Fireworks in action, watch the 3 minute multimedia Quick Tour!
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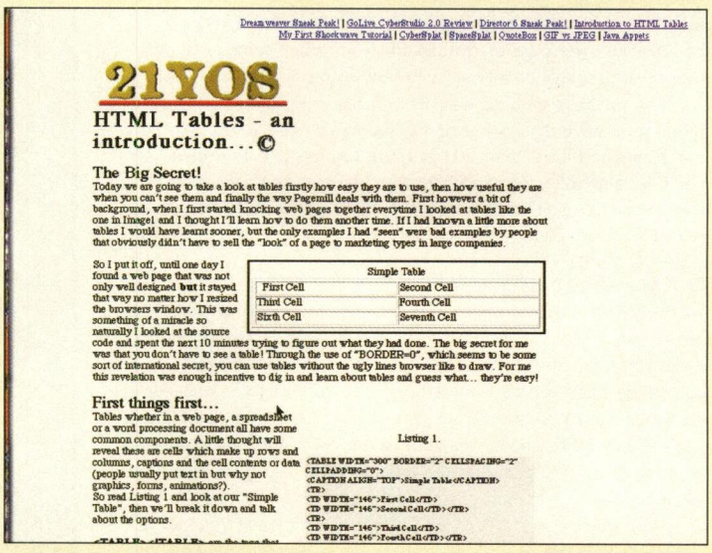
AUTOMATE
History panel
Step-by-step button maker
Fully scriptable environment
Library
Find and replace
Graphic/text styles
URL panel
Copy and paste paths
INTEGRATE
Sophisticated rollovers
SWF export
Auto-Insert in Dreamweaver
Customize HTML & JavaScript
HTML wizard
Launch and optimize
Launch and edit
Update HTML in line
Export as Adobe Illustrator

USING FIREWORKS www.macromedia.com/software/fireworks

Macromedia's Fireworks 3, which was featured in this section, is a powerful design tool. If you've enjoyed using the trial version and want to discover more of its features, Macromedia's site will tell you everything you need to know. With further explanations of the full program taking you through everything from Animated GIFs to optimisers.


Dreamweaver Sneak Peak! | GoLive CyberStudio 2.0 Review | Director 6 Sneak Peak! | Introduction to HTML Tables
My First Shockwave Tutorial | CyberSplat | SpaceSplat | QuoteBox | GIF vs JPEG | Java Applets
21YOS
HTML Tables - an introduction...©
The Big Secret!
Today we are going to take a look at tables firstly how easy they are to use, then how useful they are when you can't see them and finally the way Pagemill deals with them. First however a bit of background, when I first started knocking web pages together everytime I looked at tables like the one in Image1 and I thought I'll learn how to do them another time. If I had known a little more about tables I would have learnt sooner, but the only examples I had "seen" were bad examples by people that obviously didn't have to sell the "look" of a page to marketing types in large companies.
So I put it off, until one day I found a web page that was not only well designed but it stayed that way no matter how I resized the browsers window. This was something of a miracle so naturally I looked at the source code and spent the next 10 minutes trying to figure out what they had done. The big secret for me was that you don't have to see a table! Through the use of "BORDER=0", which seems to be some sort of international secret, you can use tables without the ugly lines browser like to draw. For me this revelation was enough incentive to dig in and learn about tables and guess what... they're easy!
Simple Table
First Cell
Second Cell
Third Cell
Fourth Cell
Sixth Cell
Seventh Cell
First things first...
Tables whether in a web page, a spreadsheet or a word processing document all have some common components. A little thought will reveal these are cells which make up rows and columns, captions and the cell contents or data (people usually put text in but why not graphics, forms, animations?).
So read Listing 1 and look at our "Simple Table", then we'll break it down and talk about the options.
Listing 1.
<TABLE WIDTH="300" BORDER="2" CELLSPACING="2" CELLPADDING="0">
<CAPTION ALIGN="TOP">Simple Table</CAPTION>
<TR>
<TD WIDTH="146">First Cell</TD>
<TD WIDTH="146">Second Cell</TD></TR>
<TR>
<TD WIDTH="146">Third Cell</TD>
<TD WIDTH="146">Fourth Cell</TD></TR>

MAKING TABLES www.21yos.com/HTML/Articles/HTMLTables

21 Year Old Software's table site is an invaluable resource. Starting with the basics, the site shows you how tables are used, where to use them and how to create them in HTML and in Adobe Pagemill. It's a good insight into how the code behind the page is created. Refer back to the basic HTML tutorial on pages 26 and 27 to check you're up to speed. ■

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FREE

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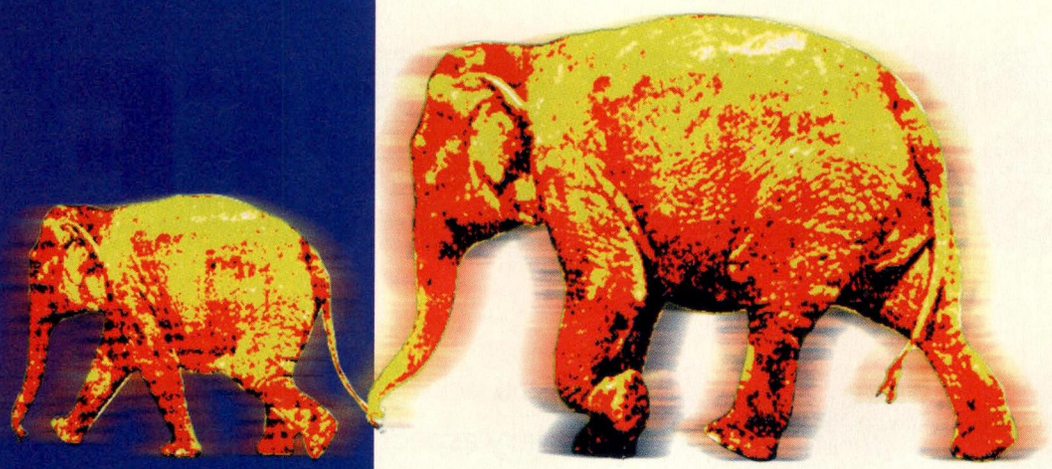

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Expert

Now we get down to the real nitty-gritty, with advice, information and powerful Web tools like HoTMetaL PRO we bring your pages to life with some nifty interactive elements

Master your metas

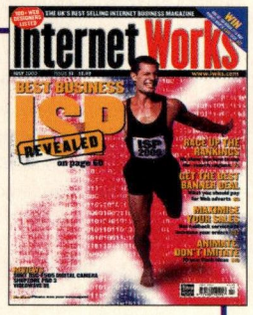
Nothing's more irritating than submitting your site to loads of search engines, only to have it consistently ignored or hidden a long way down the listings. Promoting your Web site is a tedious task, but there is one way of improving your chances which often gets overlooked. Metatags.

Metatags are keywords that succinctly describe the content of your Web site and many search engines use them to categorise your submission which is why they are a valuable addition to your coding. They should be found between the <head></head> tags at the start of the HTML on the page. It's easy to add metatags to your site, and certainly recommended.

To help you out with the code, take a look at the *.net* web site where you'll find a new tool, Meta Master. http://www.netmag.co.uk/webbuilder/metatag. The program is developed and provided by Sitesource and has a form for you to fill in the keywords relevant to your site. Choose your words carefully, then just click the button and hey presto, you have complete coding for your metatags which you can either cut and paste straight into your site's code or have emailed directly to you. It's a handy resource that you should use if you want to be noticed. ■

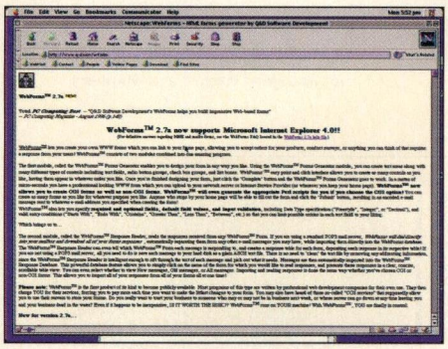
Internet Works

More and more people nowadays are finding that the Internet works for them as an effective media for conductin their business. From small two-man outfits to multi-million pound corporations you'll find that as part of their business strategy there's a Web site. Internet Works is a magazine specifically for the small business. It encourages, guides and provides information for them to make the most of their Internet presence. Find out more at www.iwks.com.



Focus on forms

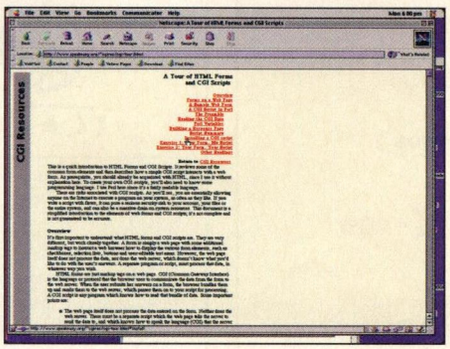
Getting feedback from your site's visitors is a pre-requisite to making sure that you're targetting your audience well. Forms provide the ideal tool to give visitors the opportunity to answer targetted questions and have them delivered directly to your desktop. Practical Web Pages *have collected some handy resources to help you to make the most of forms*



Web Forms

www.q-d.com/wf.htm

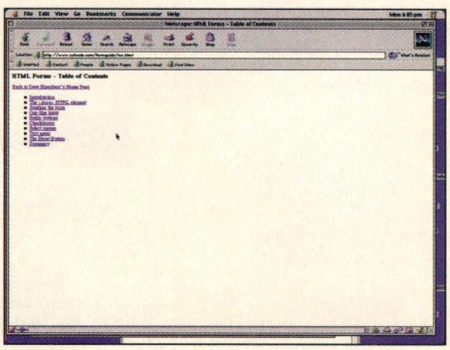
Doadload some software that will take care of your forms for you. Once you've finished designing your form, just click the 'Complete' button. In a matter of minutes you'll have a professional looking form which you can upload to your site.



CGI resources

http://www.speakeasy.org/~cgires/cgi-tour.html

Start getting clever with your forms and use CGI scripts instead of a simple mailto:. CGI scripts gives your forms a lot more versatility and enable you to ask more intelligent questions from your Web site's visitors.



HTML Forms

http://www.catcode.com/formguide/toc.html

Once people start building Web sites they find it hard to stop. This personal insight into forms is actually really helpful and the tutorials are well worth visiting for more information about forms and the elements that go together to make one.

Domain names

*Win friends and influence people by having your own domain name. **Chris Mitchell** shows you how you can impress your chums without spending a small fortune*

So, you've got a Web site but you're fed up with having some outlandishly long address like www.freewebspaceprovider.com/websites/mywebpages/index.html. It's a pain to type in emails and impossible to recite it to people at dinner parties without them falling asleep in their soup by the time you've got to the end. So if you want to dress your Web site to impress, you need a domain name – preferably without having to take out a second mortgage. Here's a crash course on how to do it.

Think of a name

A domain name is your own personal Web address, which you pay for and so have the exclusive right to use. The 'netmag.co.uk' bit in www.netmag.co.uk is the magazine's domain name, for example. Because the Net has become so popular, millions of domain names have already been registered, so you have to do a bit of head-scratching to come up with a name that hasn't already been taken.

See if someone else thought of it first

When you register a name, you have a choice of end bits:

.co.uk Indicates the site is commercial (or personal) and based in the UK.

.com Short for commercial.

.org For organisations (usually charities).

.net For Internet service providers.

This means you've got four potential endings for your name, so if someone has already got www.mychoice.com you could go for www.mychoice.co.uk. You can find out whether a name has been registered by using the free search services at sellers such as Easily (www.easily.co.uk) and The Name (www.thename.co.uk).

How much money do you want to spend?

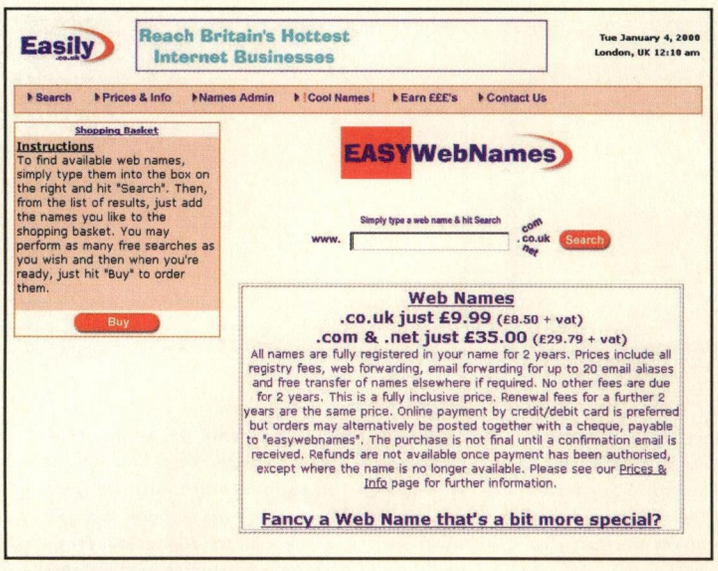
Once you've found a name you want, you need to register it. There are a vast number of domain-name sellers out there, and you'll find a list at www.netmag.co.uk/features60whatsinaname/part7.asp At the time of writing, Easily (www.easily.co.uk) was offering the cheapest registration fees, charging £10 for a .co.uk name and £35 for .com .net and .org. Registering is as simple as banging in your address details and credit-card number and hitting the button. Once you've done that, you then own the name for the next two years. You'll have to pay a further fee for each year you want to own the name after that.

If you're interested in what's going on behind the scenes, .co.uk domain names are controlled by the non-profit organisation Nominet (www.nominet.net), while all the others are looked after by US company Network Solutions (www.networksolutions.com) and ICANN (the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, at www.icann.org). All domain-name sellers have to talk to these chaps to check the availability of your name and ensure no-one else can buy it once you have. Since the seller does the donkey work, all you really have to think about when looking for a domain-name seller is how much they're charging.

Now there's only one more bit to figure out: whether you want Web forwarding or Web hosting.

Web forwarding

Web forwarding is the simplest and cheapest way to use your domain name. Most domain-name sellers offer a free Web-forwarding service, whereby they'll forward everyone that visits your domain name to your existing space. You can have free email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Tue January 4, 2000
London, UK 12:18 am
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Names Admin
Cool Names!
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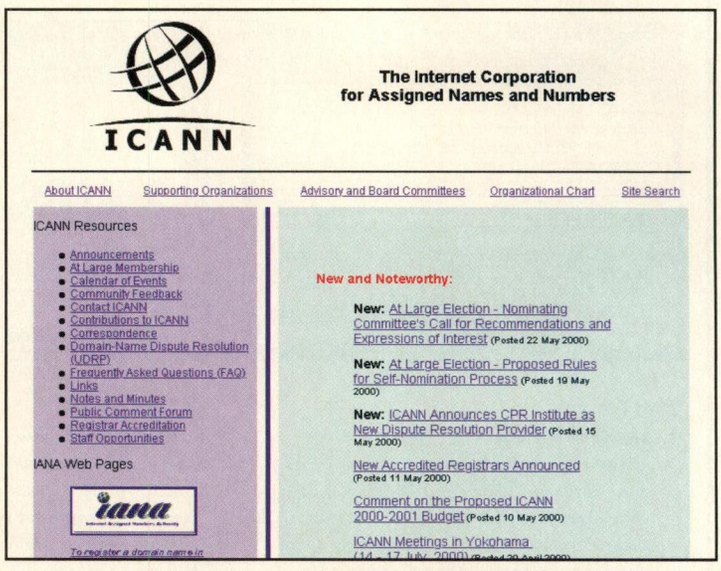
Contact Us
Shopping Basket
Instructions
To find available web names, simply type them into the box on the right and hit "Search". Then, from the list of results, just add the names you like to the shopping basket. You may perform as many free searches as you wish and then when you're ready, just hit "Buy" to order them.
Buy
EASYWebNames
Simply type a web name & hit Search
www.
.com
.co.uk
.net
Search
Web Names
.co.uk just £9.99 (£8.50 + vat)
.com & .net just £35.00 (£29.79 + vat)
All names are fully registered in your name for 2 years. Prices include all registry fees, web forwarding, email forwarding for up to 20 email aliases and free transfer of names elsewhere if required. No other fees are due for 2 years. This is a fully inclusive price. Renewal fees for a further 2 years are the same price. Online payment by credit/debit card is preferred but orders may alternatively be posted together with a cheque, payable to "easywebnames". The purchase is not final until a confirmation email is received. Refunds are not available once payment has been authorised, except where the name is no longer available. Please see our Prices & Info page for further information.
Fancy a Web Name that's a bit more special?

Easily sell domain names. You can find out whether or not a domain name is available to buy at their site


ICANN
The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
About ICANN
Supporting Organizations
Advisory and Board Committees
Organizational Chart
Site Search
ICANN Resources
Announcements
At Large Membership
Calendar of Events
Community Feedback
Contact ICANN
Contributions to ICANN
Correspondence
Domain-Name Dispute Resolution (UDRP)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
Links
Notes and Minutes
Public Comment Forum
Registrar Accreditation
Staff Opportunities
IANA Web Pages
iana
New and Noteworthy:
New: At Large Election - Nominating Committee's Call for Recommendations and Expressions of Interest (Posted 22 May 2000)
New: At Large Election - Proposed Rules for Self-Nomination Process (Posted 19 May 2000)
New: ICANN Announces CPR Institute as New Dispute Resolution Provider (Posted 15 May 2000)
New Accredited Registrars Announced (Posted 11 May 2000)
Comment on the Proposed ICANN 2000-2001 Budget (Posted 10 May 2000)
ICANN Meetings in Yokohama

www.icann.org is the Internet Coproration for Assigned Names and Numbers and look after all non-co.uk domain names

NETWORK SOLUTIONS
the dot com people
dot com directory
Make Payments
WHOIS Lookup
HOME
MAKE CHANGES
PRODUCTS & SERVICES
SITE MAP
HELP
Register a Web Address (domain name)
Have a question? Ask us!
Search for a domain name – no obligation!
Need help to get started?
www.
.com
Go!
1 enter a name, word or phrase
2 choose a domain
3 click Go!
Click here.
In Search Of...
MyDotCom
List your domains for sale with NSI
Launch your Web site today
Expand your Internet identity
Websites from ImageCafé
Put your business online! Great websites, fully customizable and affordable. Buy now and save $100.
Learn more
Corporate Services
Premier services for worldwide domain registration. Consolidated management of .com, .net, .org and country-specific domain names (.uk, .jp).
Learn more
dot com essentials™
Our kit includes your own Web Address, a one-page website and dot com mail™ - our business e-mail service.
Access your dot com mail
Learn more
Tools to power your eBusiness
Get the tools you need to track visitors, enhance your site, and promote your Web business.
Learn more
Domain Name Volume Discount Program
Order 100+ domain names with the same registration information in one simple transaction and save over 50%.
Learn more
Secure Your Website
Certify your website, secure your e-mail, and accept online credit card payments with services from VeriSign.
Learn more
Current Customers
- Update your domain records
- Set up dot com mail
- Set up dot com biz card
- Set up dot com forwarding
New and Renewal Payments
Catalog of Services
Check out our Internet identity services, such as:
- dot com gear™
- Free Web Mail
- Become an Affiliate
Get an Internet Keyword
Make it easy and intuitive for customers to navigate to your website.
- Quickest way to your site
- No typing long URLs
- Increase traffic
- Build your brand
Small Business Resources
Get products, services and advice to help manage and grow your business.
BE DIRECT DELL www.dell.com
Buy Your PC Direct from Dell®
MyComputer.com™
Tools to power your eBusiness
Corporate Information
Employment Opportunities
Advertise on Our Site
Our Business Partners
Become an Affiliate
Internet Technology Services
HOME | MAKE CHANGES | PRODUCTS & SERVICES | SITE MAP | HELP
Please read our Disclaimer, our Privacy Policy, and our Service Agreement.
© Copyright 2000 Network Solutions, Inc. All rights reserved.

(www.networksolutions.com) Networks solutions are a US outfit which controls domain names outside the UK

forwarding, too, so any messages sent to me@mychoice.co.uk will be passed on to me752@mycurrentemailaddress.com.

Forwarding gives you all the advantages of having a short, memorable domain nameand the only thing you've paid for is the domain name itself. You don't need anything special in the way of servers or permanent connections or other techy nonsense. Nice.

Web hosting

If you want your site to look truly professional, you'll need dedicated Web hosting, as opposed to free Web space from your ISP. This means your domain name and site are set up together on the same Web server, so no Web forwarding is involved. All your Web pages are located at your domain name: www.mychoice.co.uk /welcome.htm and www.mychoice.co.uk/aboutme.htm for example.

To get Web hosting, you'll need to talk to a company, who will set it up for you and deal with all the technical guff. Again, many domain-name sellers offer Web hosting, and it's also worth looking at companies such as WebFusion (www.webfusion.net).

You should be able to find a decent Web-hosting package for around £10 per month, for which you should get CGI access and detailed traffic statistics as well as server space. Companies such as Brickhouse (www.thebrickhouse.co.uk) and Portland (www.portland.co.uk) offer free hosting if your site gets fewer than 10,000 hits per month. If you're starting out, this could be a good way of testing the water before you start paying monthly fees. ■

Anon

Can't think of a good word to use for your domain name? Pop along to The Name (www.thename.co.uk) and use its Domain Wizard to generate ideas.

WIN!

A free Internet Starter Plan plus domain name

We've teamed up with Verio, the world's largest domain-based Web hosting company, to give away free Internet Starter Plans plus domain names to two lucky readers

If you like the idea of setting up and designing your own Web site but don't know where to start, help is at hand. Verio's Starter Hosting Plan is ideal for those new to the Internet. The plan allows you set up a professional looking site at minimal cost. It's flexible and easy to use and you can create a simple or sophisticated site depending on your needs. You also get unlimited email aliases e.g. anything@yourdomainname.com letting your customers keep in touch.

What you get in your Starter Plan

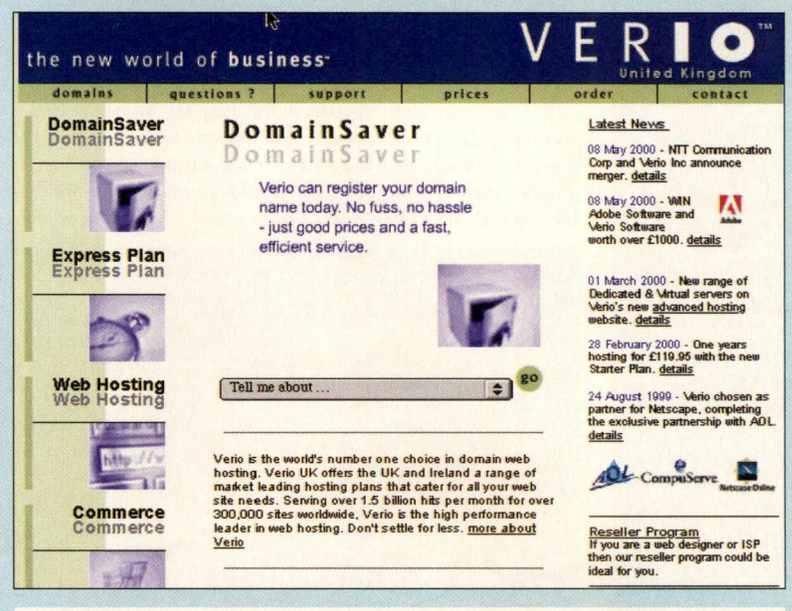
- 500 MBb/mo data transfer
- 2 POP accounts with smtp capabilities for sending and receiving emails
- 5 email forwarding options
- FTP support
- FrontPage extensions
- Page counter script
- Form-to-email script (for use as a comment form etc)
- Directory password protection capabilities
- Access to the raw log files MKStats for analysing web usage

Usual price: £119.95 (plus VAT) for a year's hosting including set up fees

A domain name can be added to this plan for just £40 or you can transfer your own domain name for free.

Verio (UK) is part of the world's largest domain-based Web hosting company and a leading provider of Internet services to small and mid-size companies. Verio offer a vital link for small and mid-size companies to the world of e-business by providing a complete range of high performance hosting services, including Web hosting and e-commerce. www.verio.co.uk

For a chance to win one of Verio's Starter Hosting Plans just answer the simple question below. Email your answers to us at pracweb.comp@futurenet.co.uk by Thursday 31 August 2000 at the latest.


the new world of business
VERIO
United Kingdom
domains
questions ?
support
prices
order
contact
DomainSaver
DomainSaver
Express Plan
Express Plan
Web Hosting
Web Hosting
Commerce
Commerce
DomainSaver
DomainSaver
Verio can register your domain name today. No fuss, no hassle - just good prices and a fast, efficient service.
Tell me about ...
go
Verio is the world's number one choice in domain web hosting. Verio UK offers the UK and Ireland a range of market leading hosting plans that cater for all your web site needs. Serving over 1.5 billion hits per month for over 300,000 sites worldwide, Verio is the high performance leader in web hosting. Don't settle for less. more about Verio
Latest News
08 May 2000 - NTT Communication Corp and Verio Inc announce merger. details
08 May 2000 - WIN Adobe Software and Verio Software worth over £1000. details
01 March 2000 - New range of Dedicated & Virtual servers on Verio's new advanced hosting website. details
28 February 2000 - One years hosting for £119.95 with the new Starter Plan. details
24 August 1999 - Verio chosen as partner for Netscape, completing the exclusive partnership with AOL. details
CompuServe
Reseller Program
If you are a web designer or ISP then our reseller program could be ideal for you.

Question

How many POP accounts do you get with the Starter Plan?

Terms and conditions

No cash alternatives are available. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered in to. Employees of Future Publishing and Verio are not eligible to enter. All entries must be received by Thursday 31 August. This offer is open to UK residents only.

Please mention in your email if you don't want your details passed on to a related third party.

In brief

SOFTWARE: *HoTMetaL PRO 4.0*

PROJECT: *Getting started*

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

Getting started

HoTMetaL PRO is a flexible tool for Web design. We get you started

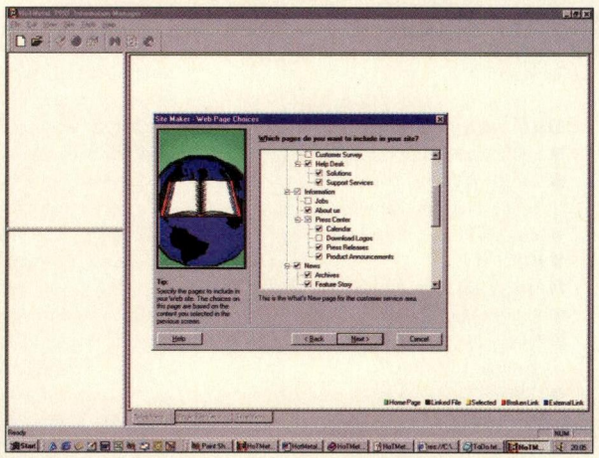
HoTMetaL PRO is best known for its strange capitalisation (spells out HTML) and for its tag-based interface. You actually get three authoring environments with the package, the word processor-like WYSIWYG (What You See is What You Get) view and the text-based HTML (HyperText Markup Language) Source view as well as the structured Tags On view, which makes it an extremely versatile design package. Options to look out for during the lengthy installation are whether you want the Visual Keyboard (an accessibility option that's great if you have trouble using a mouse) and which browser you want to test pages with. You can pick both Netscape and Internet Explorer initially, and add any other browsers later by hand. Installation does take a while because of all the OCX components the package registers, and the various extras it installs, so be patient.

Jargon Buster

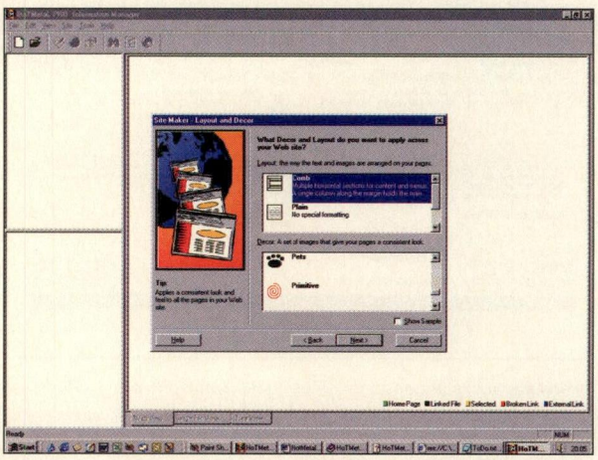
DHTML (Dynamic HTML)
This is all about producing Web pages that change as you view them. DHTML extensions enable a Web page to react to user input without sending requests to the Web server: for example sorting data that you've already downloaded locally rather than asking the Web server for a page with the sorted data on.

Markup
The technical term for the HTML tags that specify all the properties of your document (everything from an image to bold text to hyperlinks). All tags start with a < and end with another >. Pairs of tags go round an element to show where it starts and where it ends.

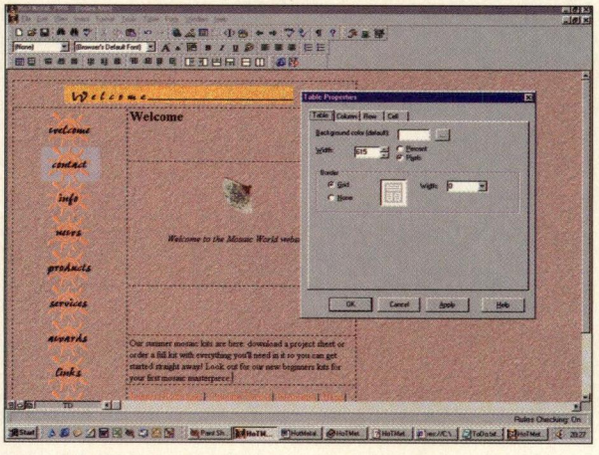
OCX
OCX stands for Object Linking and Embedding (OLE) custom control – a special program that can be created for use by applications running on Microsoft's Windows systems.



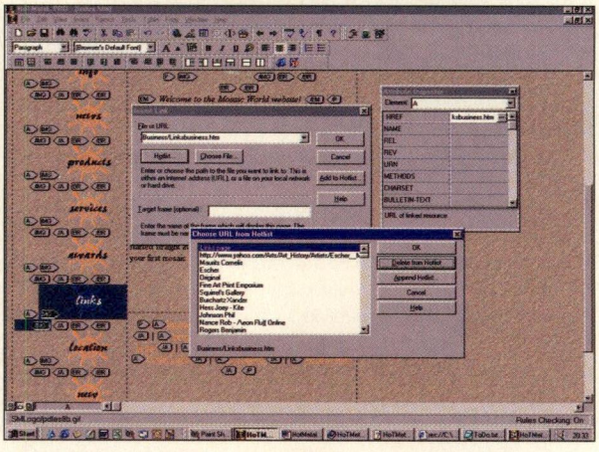
STEP 1 *The fastest way to get your Web site started is by using the Site Maker wizard which is in the Information Manager application. Wizards take all the thinking out of putting pages together, automating the whole process. From the Information Manager application, choose File, then New Project and then From Site Maker Select a template. You'll be given a number of choices. From those presented choose which of the available pages you would like to create with that template.*



STEP 2 *Now you can choose a page layout and a design for the Web site. This is the point at which you can start defining all of your personal preferences. Collect together all the style notes that you defined when planning your Web site pages 14–16. If you've got a graphic, personal or company logo you would like to use on all your Web pages you can specify the file (GIF, JPEG, PNG or BMP) when you fill in your personal details in the wizard and then look for a design that matches it.*

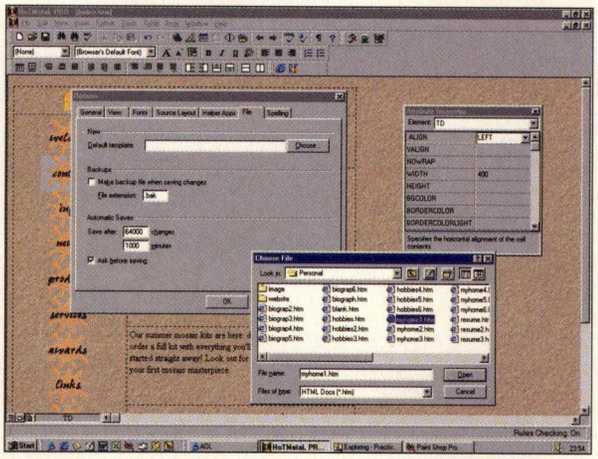


STEP 5 *Tables are a great tool to uses to lay out your Web pages as you can easily position entire elements such as the navigation bar, pictures and text exactly where you want them. If you need to do more sophisticated positioning you can use DHTML (Dynamic HTML – see Jargon buster for description) and Cascading Style Sheets (see pages 68–69), but tables are the easiest way to get you started.*

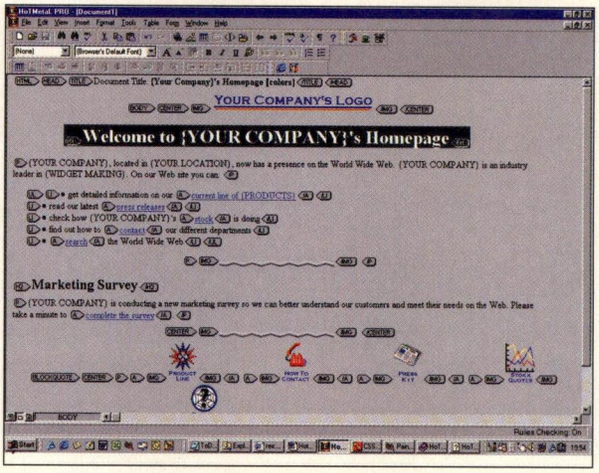


STEP 6 *To create a link (to another page or another Web site), select the text or image that you would like to link, it will activate. Choose Insert and then Link. A data entry box will appear. Use the Hotlist to create entries for pages that you link to frequently. To link to a specific place within a page choose Insert, then Bookmark to create an anchor and Insert, then Link to Bookmark to point to it.*

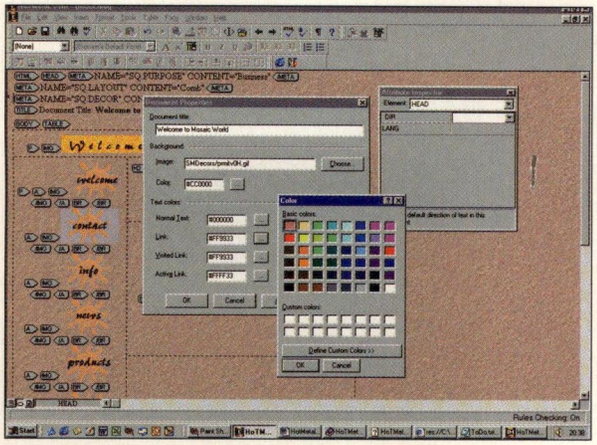
Practical Web Pages on the CD



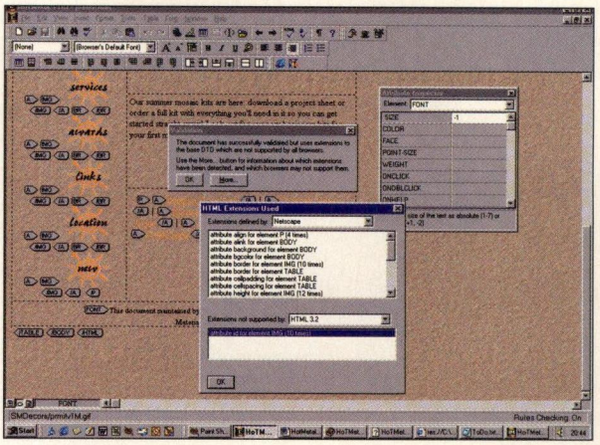
STEP 3 *You don't have to create a whole site. You can use templates to create a single page: choose File, then New in HoTMetaL PRO editor. Look through your template choices and pick the one you want. If you don't see anything you like you can define your own style and start with a blank page. To get a blank page click the New page icon on the toolbar (choose Tools, Options and then File to set a template to use with that icon instead).*



STEP 4 *Your page will start to come together after you've added all the different elements (the objects on your Web page). If you want to move an entire element (such as a heading, a button or a link to anything else) instead of just inserting some of the text from within that element, make sure you have the whole element selected and then you can move the lot. In Tag view you can click on a start or end tag. Alternatively, right-click and choose Select Element.*



STEP 7 *You might want to start styling your page now. To change the colours that you use choose File, then Properties to open the Document Properties dialog if you want to change the document colours, the background image or the page title. These are the only options that you can't set with the Attribute Inspector (which is in the View menu) which is the quick way to set options for all other elements.*



STEP 8 *When you're happy with all the page details and are ready to publish your Web pages, choose Tools, and then Check HTML first, to make sure that there's nothing wrong with your Web page. The wizard will either move the cursor directly to any problems on the page or tell you that the page is valid but the tags you're using aren't supported by all browsers: click More for specific details.*

Jargon Buster

Use tables
An HTML table lets you lay out information. Start with regular rows and tables and merge cells to get the layout you need. HoTMetaL PRO lets you add, delete, resize and move rows and columns and merge and split cells.

Use the toolbars
Use the HoTMetaL PRO toolbars for quick access to lots of commands: choose View, Toolbars and pick from Advanced, Tables, QuickTools, Forms, Macros, Browsers and Image Mapping as well as the Standard and Formatting toolbars you usually see on screen. Toolbars appear as you need them but if there's one you often use, keep it up all the time.

Jargon Buster

Use the Information Manager
The Information Manager will check links for you. The Site Doctor appears when you move files around in a project, and asks if you want to repair links to that file but you can open it to check for files with broken links to other pages or external Web sites, and for orphan files that can't be reached by following links from the index page so no-one will ever get to them.

Creating forms

Use online forms to get crucial feedback from your site's visitors

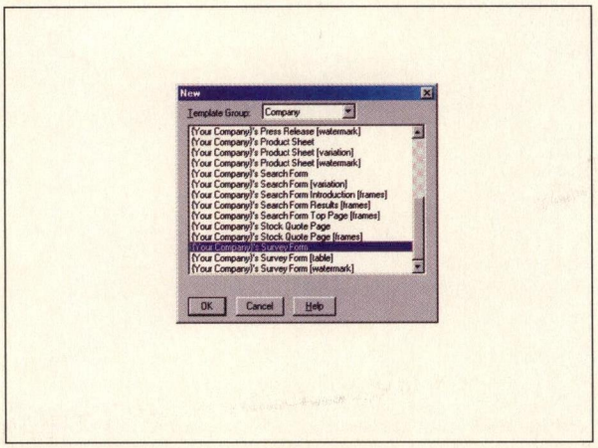
In brief

SOFTWARE: *HoTMetaL PRO 4.0*

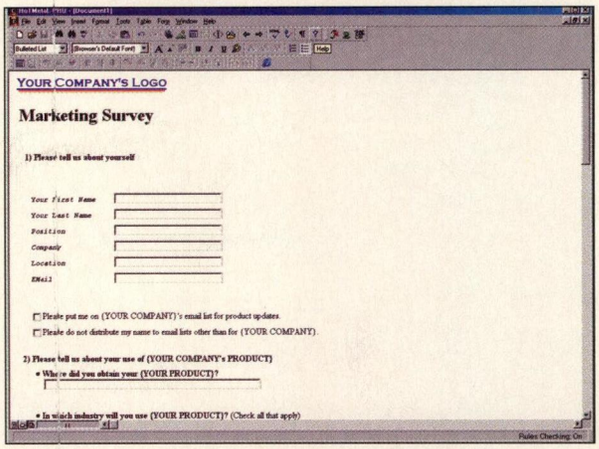
PROJECT: *Creating forms*

TIME: 1 hour 30 minutes

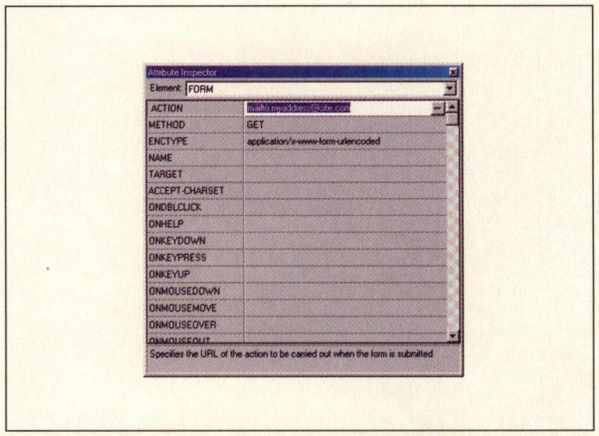
Most ISPs will give you 20Mb or so of personal Web space free. This is all very well, until you want to get some feedback from the visitors to your site. Then you discover that you haven't got enough Web space to handle HTML forms. But don't worry, as you can just have the contents of a form emailed to you instead. Just fire up your copy of HoTMetaL, as it gives you the tools you need to create a mailto form. Using forms you can use specific questions or even radio buttons and check boxes to get useful information. Why use a form? I you want to get information from people looking at your Web page in a structured way, the HTML form tags allow you to set out questions and provide input fields for the answers that get sent back from the browser either directly or via email. You can include text boxes (both small and large), pick lists, tick boxes and radio buttons in a form.


New
Template Group: Company
[Your Company]'s Press Release [watermark]
[Your Company]'s Product Sheet
[Your Company]'s Product Sheet [variation]
[Your Company]'s Product Sheet [watermark]
[Your Company]'s Search Form
[Your Company]'s Search Form [variation]
[Your Company]'s Search Form Introduction [frames]
[Your Company]'s Search Form Results [frames]
[Your Company]'s Search Form Top Page [frames]
[Your Company]'s Stock Quote Page
[Your Company]'s Stock Quote Page [frames]
[Your Company]'s Survey Form
[Your Company]'s Survey Form [table]
[Your Company]'s Survey Form [watermark]
OK
Cancel
Help

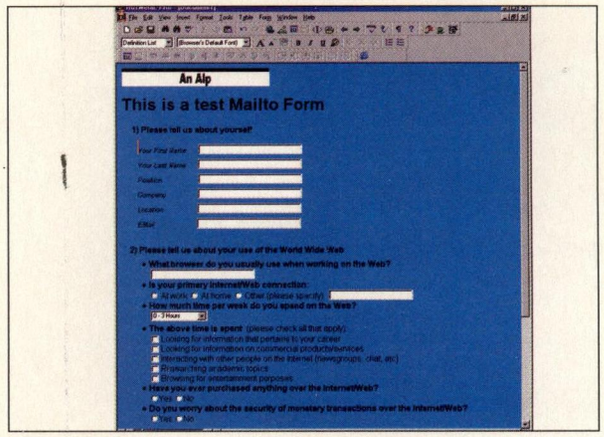
STEP 1 *First open HoTMetal PRO and choose to create an HTML page. Before you can start to build a form you have to create a Web page to put it into. Pick a template with a form layout and the HoTMetaL PRO wizard will set to work creating the basis of the page for you. All you'll need to do once the key elements are set up is to customise the page to meet your own specific requirements. All this should only take you a couple of minutes.*


YOUR COMPANY'S LOGO
Marketing Survey
1) Please tell us about yourself
Your First Name
Your Last Name
Position
Company
Location
EMail
Please put me on (YOUR COMPANY)'s email list for product updates.
Please do not distribute my name to email lists other than for (YOUR COMPANY).
2) Please tell us about your use of (YOUR COMPANY's PRODUCT)
Where did you obtain your (YOUR PRODUCT)?
In which industry will you use (YOUR PRODUCT)? (Check all that apply)

STEP 2 *The page that we're using as an example is a simple survey form. Starting with the basic layout using one of the available templates, you can edit the fields to suit your own ends. Use the drop down Edit menu to edit the values and the design, ready for installation on your Web site. HoTMetaL's default view is WYSIWYG, which doesn't let you edit the form properties so you'll need to turn on the HTML tag view to check how the code looks.*



STEP 5 *The Attribute Inspector allows you to edit the attributes associated with any HTML tag. To create a form that mails its contents to you, you will need to set the Action attribute of the form to be "mailto:myaddress@mysite" - using the email address where you want the forms returned to. Make sure that you've also set the Method to Post so that information is passed to your mail client correctly. Without this your valuable forms will end up lost in the ether.*


An Alp
This is a test Mailto Form
1) Please tell us about yourself
2) Please tell us about your use of the World Wide Web
What browser do you usually use when working on the Web?
Is your primary Internet/Web connection
How much time per week do you spend on the Web?
The above time is spent (please check all that apply)
Looking for information that pertains to your career
Looking for information on commercial products/services
Interacting with other people on the Internet (newsgroups, chat, etc)
Researching academic topics
Browsing for entertainment purposes
Have you ever purchased anything over the Internet/Web?
Do you worry about the security of monetary transactions over the Internet/Web?

STEP 6 *You can then edit the contents of the page to create the "mailto:" form you actually need. Using the basic template you can take out field entries add new text boxes with varying lengths, change the questions to suit the form you're after. It's time for fine-tuning. It may be a survey, or a request for more information, or even a competition entry that you're creating. You can also tweak the colours and the fonts to make everything look the way you want.*

Hints & tips

Use buttons

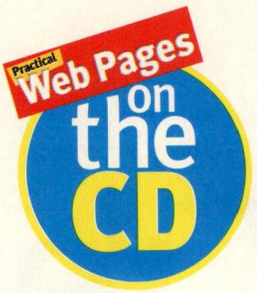
HTML forms need to be submitted to a server, and you can include a Submit button on your page. When a user clicks on this button, the contents of the form are sent to the URL listed in the form Action, using the Method chosen.

Quicker forms

You can create your forms with the Element commands or using the Attribute Inspector to modify any tags and set scripting actions. But once you know more about forms, you'll find it's quicker to work in Tag view and work on the form tags directly.

What do you see?

If you're trying to get your form laid out exactly the way you want it, don't rely on the WYSIWYG view to show it as it will look in a Web browser. Use the Preview command instead to check it in as many Web browsers as you like.

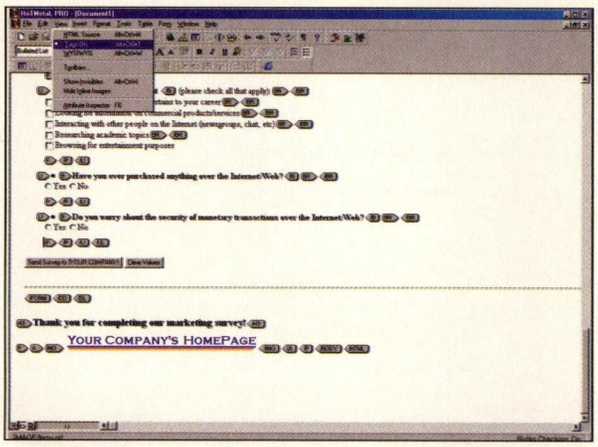


Jargon Buster

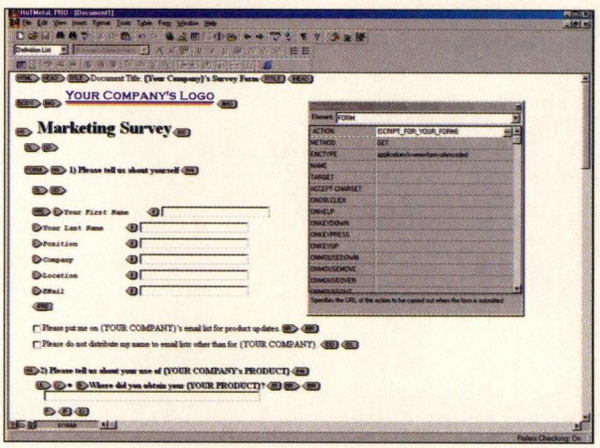
Attributes
HTML tags aren't just simple formatting controls; you can give them attributes that fine-tune what they do, setting colours or other properties.

Mail to URLs
A URL that defines an email address. You can use one as a link that opens a mail page, or in a form to send the contents as an email message. Mailto URLs are a useful feature of any Web page, as you can use them as contact links.

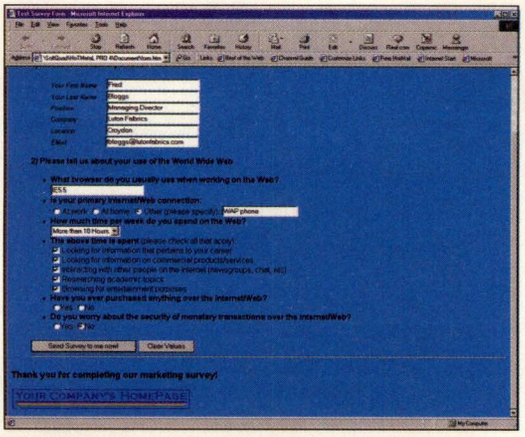
CGI (Common Gateway Interface)
The most common way of linking Web pages and Web servers to applications. With CGI, form submissions can be processed on a Web server and used in your applications. But to use CGI you have write a script and install it on the Web server: you won't be allowed to do that with many ISPs.



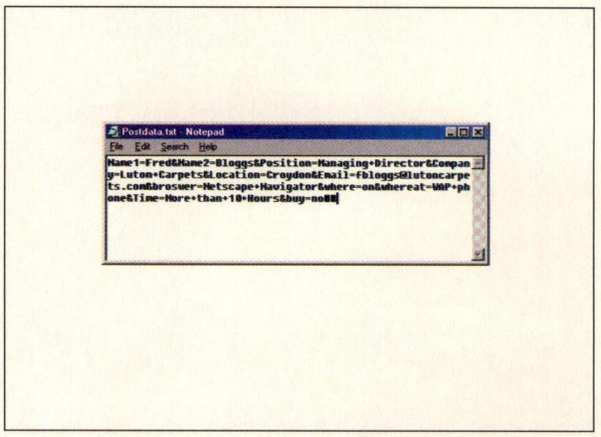
STEP 3 *To find this pull down the View menu and choose the HTML tag view. It's a handy way to view the page and you can immediately see how the code is affecting the page and where you have superfluous tags and where there might be tags missing. This allows you to see the various tags used to make up the sample form. With all this information to hand you can now start editing the contents of your page, and add your own logos, questions and style.*



STEP 4 *Your form's starting to look good but it isn't going anywhere. We've identified that we want it to work as a maito: form, which means we want it delivered to an email addressee. So, in order to turn the sample form into a "mailto:" form that will send an email message to you when a visitor to your site clicks on the submit button you'll need to move the cursor to just beside the Form tag, and then right-click to launch the Attribute Inspector.*



STEP 7 *With all your elements in place and the style honed to your liking you're now ready to test your page. To do this you should use HoTMetaL PRO's preview function to launch the test page in your chosen browser. We've configured our copy of HoTMetaL to use Internet Explorer, but you can use Netscape Navigator just as easily. Just fill in the form and click on the submit button. And keep your fingers crossed that the page doesn't fall over.*



STEP 8 *You'll receive a message with key fields completed as you filled them in on the form. Mailto: forms will return your submission, but it's likely that you'll need to work through the resulting entry to glean the information that you're after. The message may not be particularly clear. We'd recommend transfering the message to a text editor to view the resulting information, as your mail client won't be the best tool for viewing the results either.*

In brief

SOFTWARE: *HoTMetal PRO 4.0*

PROJECT: *Creating style sheets*

TIME: 1 hour

Creating style

Specify page size, margins, and fonts using HoTMetaL PRO's style sheets

Cascading style sheets are groups of styles and those styles are groups of properties that define how an HTML element appears in a Web browser. You can define styles with an external file attached to an HTML document. Using an external single style sheet for all the pages in your Web site makes changes throughout the entire site easier than making them by hand.

CSS lets you create a single style definition. Instead of setting the font by hand each time you want to set a style definition.

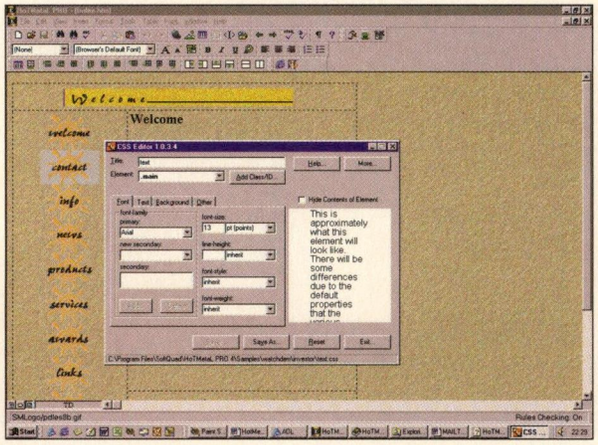
H3 { font-family: Arial; font-style: bold; colour: blue }

Now every H3 heading will come out bold and blue. And with HoTMetaL PRO's cascading style sheet editor you don't need to write the style sheets by hand either.

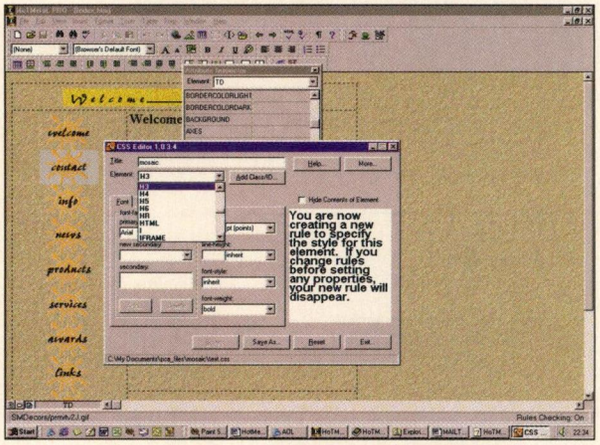
Jargon Buster

Cascading Style Sheets

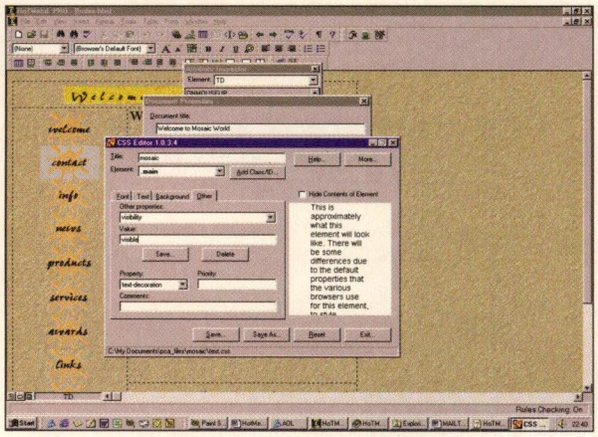
They are called cascading because you can apply multiple style sheets to the same Web page with different levels of importance. If you define conflicting styles for the same HTML tag, the innermost definition (the one closest to the tag) is the one that's used. An inline style beats a span tag, but the span tag has priority over a style defined in the head of the document, which in turn takes precedence over an attached style sheet.



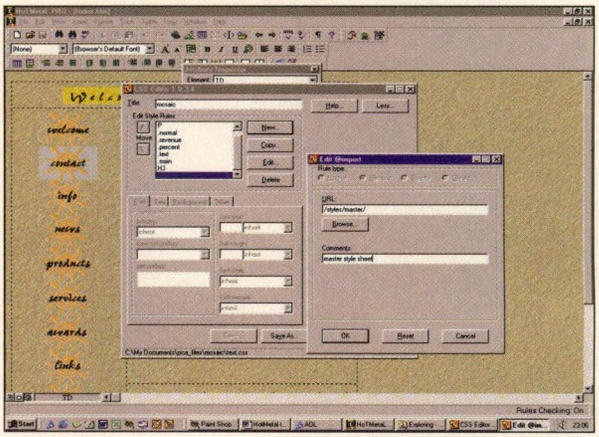
STEP 1 *To use the cascading style sheet editor in HoTMetal PRO choose Tools, then Cascading Style Sheets. If the document you are currently working on is linked to a cascading style sheet file, the style sheet editor will automatically load that file. Otherwise, a dialog box will appear, prompting you to choose a file. We'll show you instructions here for attaching a new style sheet to your document.*


Welcome
You are now creating a new rule to specify the style for this element. If you change rules before setting any properties, your new rule will disappear.

STEP 2 *You'll be given the option to name your style sheet. So, give the style sheet a title then pick an existing element to edit or type in a new one to create. On the Font tab you can set a font (the type of text) or a font class (like serif): choose a secondary specification for the font so that if your main font isn't on the viewer's PC they'll use something other than their default font.*



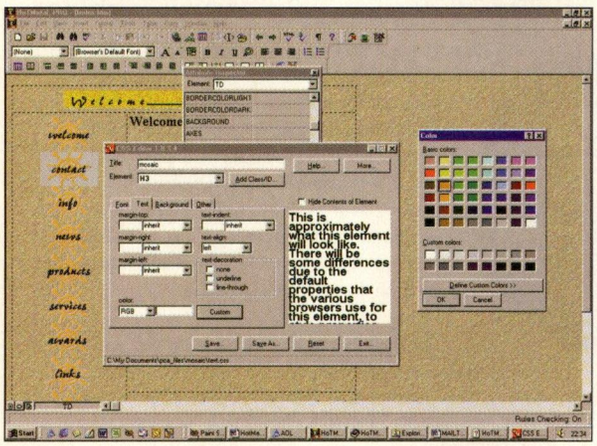
STEP 5 *Use the Other tab to add any properties to your page that HoTMetaL PRO doesn't know about. For example, you can add blink as a valid value to text-decoration or create the visibility property (for hidden text), with the values both visible and hidden. Fill in the property (if you've given it a value before it will be saved to the drop-down menu) then set the value and choose Save. Try it and see what you think.*



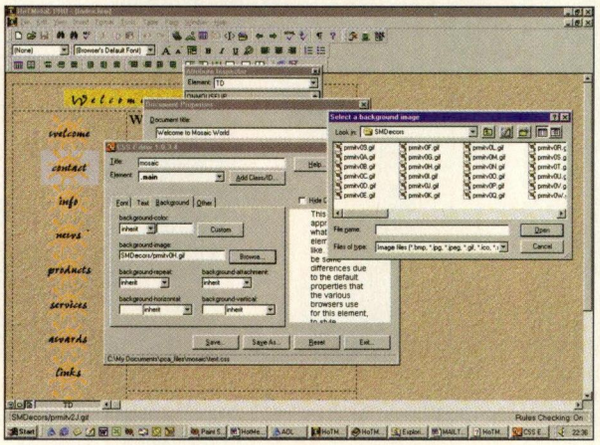
STEP 6 *Click the More... button to switch to advanced mode if you want to create rules to help you group elements of your page together and assign style properties to each of the groups, or you want to create rules with which you can import other style sheets (@import rules) or specify meta-information (@meta rules) to help you to manage your style sheets.*

Practical Web Pages on the CD

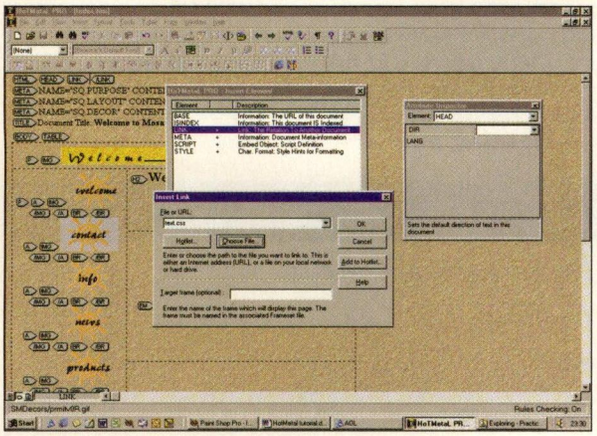
sheets



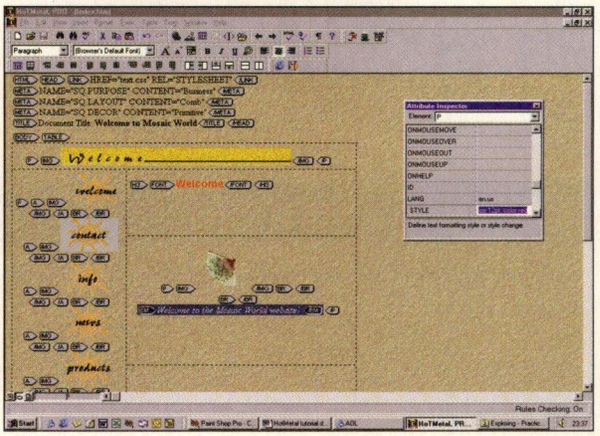
STEP 3 *Choose the Text tab from the menu to edit the indentation and margin settings for paragraphs on your page: you can specify these as centimetres, inches, points or pixels. Next set font colours here rather than on the font tab: the pull-down menu gives you 16 standard Windows colours or you can type in an RGB value or choose from the palette. Remember to choose a Web safe colour then you will see it on all browsers.*



STEP 4 *From the Background tab you can choose a background colour (including transparent) or graphic to use on your pages. Use background-repeat to tile (replicate) the image across or down the page and background-attachment to set whether the image scrolls with the browser window when the user scrolls: background-horizontal, background-vertical set exact or relative position.*



STEP 7 *To do this, in the Tags On view, click the button immediately after the HEAD start-tag and choose Insert, Element, Link and give the URL for your .css file (that's the name you chose in step 2 and choose OK. Now, move to the Attribute Inspector (you'll find this on the View menu if it's not already open), choose the REL field and type "Stylesheet".*



STEP 8 *Attach a style to your style sheet. Apply a standard style from the style drop-down or you could identify your own styles by typing them in to the STYLE field in the Attribute Inspector. You can use an online style that way: write the style as property: value and separate multiple properties with a semi-colon and you can put the style straight into the STYLE field.* ■

Hints & tips

Too old for CSS

As with so many things, CSS needs recent browsers: Versions 4 and 5 of Netscape and Internet Explorer support CSS but earlier versions don't (IE 3 makes a stab at it) so you may need to think about what to do for older browsers. If you want some text to appear in the correct font or not at all, set the text to the same colour as the page background, then set the font with a Span tag and only CSS-supporting browsers will show it. For text suggesting that people should upgrade to a CSS-capable browser, create a style for hidden text (visibility: hidden): in older browsers the text will be visible.

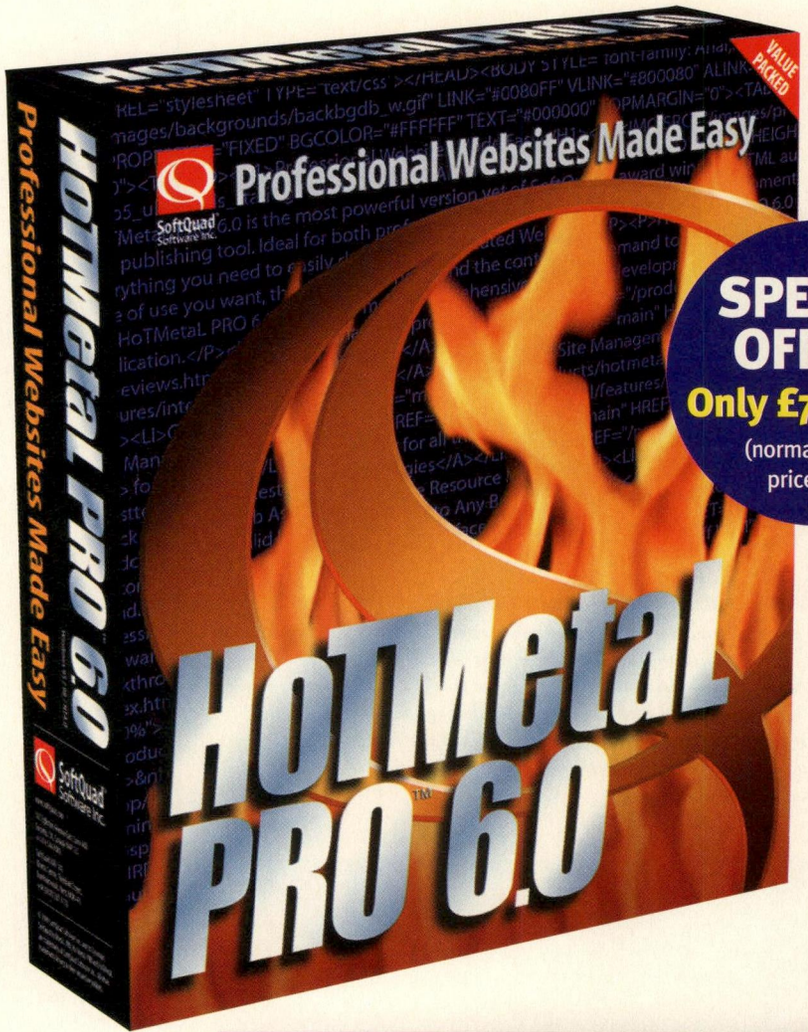
What style do you see?

It's even more important to preview your CSS pages in a variety of Web browsers than to check forms out, because many of the neatest CSS features look vastly different depending on which browser you use. Install the browsers on your system then choose File, Preview in Browser and add them to the list: you'll see all the browsers HoTMetaL PRO knows about on the Browser toolbar.

Practical Web Pages on the CD

HoTMetaL PRO Upgrade

If you enjoyed the free full HoTMetaL product on our cover CD, why not take advantage of our special offer and upgrade to the latest version: HoTMetaL PRO 6.0



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Only £79 + VAT
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HoTMetaL PRO 6.0 gives you total control over your HTML so you can develop sophisticated Web sites. Its multi-view editing modes make it ideal for both the professional developer as well as the less experienced.

The latest version of HoTMetaL PRO is packed with new tools and features that help the developer working with sites that incorporate the latest Web technologies. HoTMetaL PRO offers full support for CSS, frames, Dynamic HTML, Java, JavaScript, VBScript, Miva, XML, WebTV, Shockwave, Flash, QuickTime, RealAudio, streaming audio and video amongst others. There are also many maintenance tools included that perform tasks such as working out page download time and checking your site's links. Other features include advanced asset management, built-in FTP, file synchronisation, site-wide search and replace and a set of tools for live editing online.

To Upgrade to HoTMetaL PRO 6.0 you must first register your free copy of HoTMetaL PRO 4.0 at www.hotmetalpro.com/register using the registration number 233040335001. Then fill out the form (below) and send it with a cheque for £92.82 made out to SoftQuad (UK) Ltd to:

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Email: .....
Company name: .....
Address: .....
.....**Postcode:** .....
Telephone: .....
Email: .....

Colour schemes

If you want your Web site to make an impact, you need to make it visually inviting. ***Nick Nettleton*** *shows you how to implement a colour scheme*

Striking visual impact. Instant appeal, instant identity. Compelling navigation system. Everyone loves your Web site, the links keep flowing in, and your counter grows and grows. Before a month is out, you have a hot search-engine ranking, a write-up in a top directory and a handful of willing contributors. No kidding. Plus, your Web site looks… well, damn good. It's a dream, right?

Music for your eyes

It could be, for sure. But if you put some passion into your colours (passion being the sum total of time, love, inspiration and obsession), you might just hit the big time. You'd have a pretty good chance, in fact. Run the gauntlet of the search engines, and you'll find some 50 per cent of Web sites steering their colours precariously between the unimaginative and the out-of-control. So there's plenty of room to make your mark with something one step better.

How hard can it be?

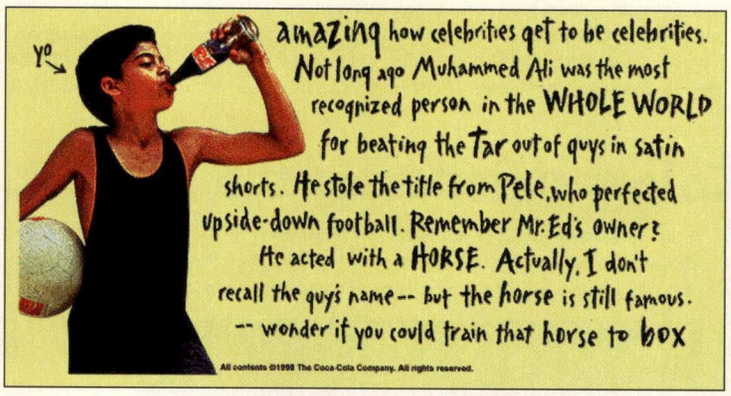
When it comes to unimaginative colour schemes, look for black text on a white background with a murky blue or green thrown in for measure, a splash of red for 'impact' and some dodgy GIFs or a badly compressed JPEG. Think MSN (www.msn.com), Netscape (www.netscape.com) or some of the search engines, where you'd expect to see better.

Out-of-control colour combinations might display clashing, marbly blue backgrounds with harsh yellow and black text, a badly compressed JPEG and a zillion wriggling GIF animations. A quick trawl of Fortune City (www.fortunecity.com) reveals a domainful culprits, or see Worst Of The Web (www.worstoftheweb.com) for the ultimate case in hand. It's well worth trawling through some of the worst because we all find it easy to say what we don't like, it takes a little more thought to disover what you really do like. Eliminating the bad will help you to identify the good.

Not that any of this is wrong per se. It's just that, thrown together in fear of HTML (everyone's nervous of code, right?), Web site colour schemes usually come second in the pecking order to "What the hell am I going to write in this?", "What on earth is CSS and do I have to use it?", and "How can I make this look okay when decent graphics take an age to squeeze down the phone line?"

But hold back for a moment, because the Internet is primarily a visual medium. No one likes reading on the Web – surfers only read when they already believe it'll be worth it, and dynamic visuals with snippets of text are the fastest way to convince them of that. Forget compression paranoia, forget HTML, CSS and JavaScript, and forget the Web critics. Take time to figure out what your Web site's about, then start thinking in colours and fonts.

Colours and fonts are your opening gambit. They offer immediate visual impact, and they amount to the first impression you give – instant communication. Make a mess of it and you've lost your visitor at the starting line. Make it brilliant and they're hooked already – check out the Tango site (www.tango.com), where a fantastically powerful orange-and-black entry just lures you on.


yo
amazing how celebrities get to be celebrities. Not long ago Muhammed Ali was the most recognized person in the WHOLE WORLD for beating the Tar out of guys in satin shorts. He stole the title from Pele, who perfected upside-down football. Remember Mr. Ed's owner? He acted with a HORSE. Actually, I don't recall the guy's name -- but the horse is still famous. -- wonder if you could train that horse to box
All contents ©1998 The Coca-Cola Company. All rights reserved.

Graphics have immediate impact, such as Coca-Cola's opening page. Get your colours and fonts right, and you're away. Cream is an interesting alternative to white, for an easy-to-read site

So if fonts and colours set the pace for how visitors uncover your site, then let them set the pace for how you design it too. Everything else will follow, from your layout and style to your graphics and even content. Use crisp, clear and minimalist colours and fonts for a serious, informative and business-like identity. But don't think that has to mean dull – take a look at the Pantone site (www.pantone.com), which uses simple but striking cyan on blue

Jargon Buster

CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
CSS is a new feature being added to HTML to give developers and users more control. Style sheets define how different elements of the page such as headers and links should appear. Cascading style sheets are multiple style sheets that can be applied to the same Web page.

Whatever you do, keep your colour scheme consistent through your site, or visitors will think they're somewhere else

• Start with your background colour – it sets the pace. Use a pale colour for high-information sites, a dark colour for high-impact graphics, and a garish background only if you're feeling brave.

• Now you need to build a colour scheme around it. It's much easier to work with colour and style in a graphics package, so start by mocking up your look in there, with mock text. Then you can cut out and export the graphics, carry over your colour palette and recreate your layout with HTML tables or CSS.

• Stick with three or four colours to begin with. Few of the best sites use more than this. If you need more colours, go for neighbouring colours in the colour wheel – it preserves your look.

• Use the full range of dark and light colours to make the text more readable on the page and guide your site visitors around your layout.

If you spot a colour scheme you like, steal it! It's easy to copy colours from an image into a Swatch palette

• Steal colour palettes and graphics from sites. Print Screen, copy the image into your graphics app, then add the colours to your swatches palette. You can usually use the Dropper tool to select the colour, then click on your palette to add it.

with some white and black thrown in. Or use wild fonts and crazy colours for a fun and funky identity, such as Coca-Cola (www.coke.com). There's nothing to stop you getting extreme – extreme is positive, even in a serious context. It stands out and makes a memorable impression. You just need to keep it under control, and that's the skill.

Holding it together

We could go on about "pink and green should never be seen" and all that, but frankly it's tosh. There's not a rule that can't be broken, and if a colour looks great, use it. The problem is how to build something dramatic without it all getting horribly garish and out of control. It's actually not that hard, and there's nothing enigmatic and conceptual about building great schemes. You just need to consider the different elements to your pages, what they actually do, and how they need to work together.

Start with your background, since it pretty well governs the way the rest of your colours go. At the same time, you need to be thinking about your main body text, which must be clear and easy to read. And then you need to whip up something special for your navigation element and links – arguably your top concern. They need to be consistent, or they'll get confusing, and they need to be obvious and appealing so surfers actually use them rather than hotfoot it elsewhere.

Backgrounds basically fall into four categories – the white and light (traditional), the black and dark (dramatic, but the text is harder to read), an intense single colour (say red or blue – visually strong but tough to work with) and the rainbow look (forget it).

White is the favourite for functional, high-info sites. It's easy to read text as long as it's dark, it's easy to choose other colours

Jargon Buster

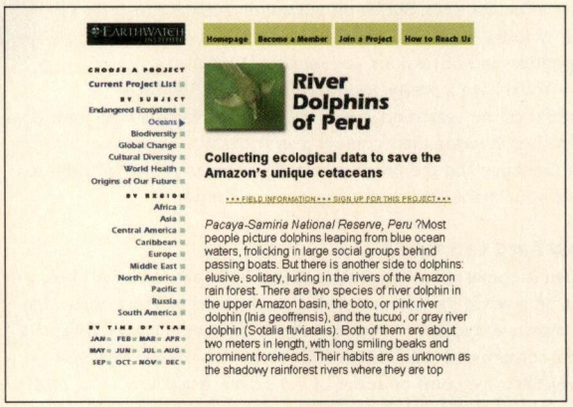
GIF (Graphics Interchange Format)
This is a file format for saving images so that they can be viewed by a Web browser.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group)
This is a file format with a compressed image which reduces the file size for faster loading of images.

Colour palettes of the famous

A top colour scheme puts you in the professional league – and it's not that hard to achieve. Check out these excellent Web sites – if you like their colour palettes you can copy them (see Tips and tricks section) then load them into Paint Shop Pro, Photoshop or similar. Also, you can copy the hex values into your site template for text, backgrounds and so on.

Firetrap's site (www.firetrap.co.uk) combines a scratchy red and hot pink background over a black background to striking effect. The multi-coloured background works because the colours are close, and the text isn't too much hard work because it's big, white and there's not much of it. But this kind of scheme wouldn't work for a high-information site.


EARTHWATCH
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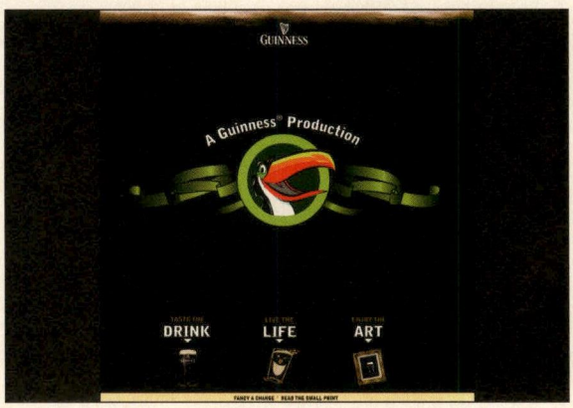
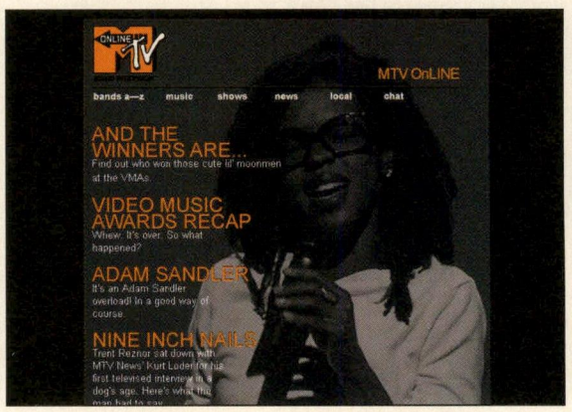
Become a Member
Join a Project
How to Reach Us
CHOOSE A PROJECT
Current Project List
BY SUBJECT
Endangered Ecosystems
Oceans
Biodiversity
Global Change
Cultural Diversity
World Health
Origins of Our Future
BY REGION
Africa
Asia
Central America
Caribbean
Europe
Middle East
North America
Pacific
Russia
South America
BY TIME OF YEAR
JAN FEB MAR APR
MAY JUN JUL AUG
SEP OCT NOV DEC
River Dolphins of Peru
Collecting ecological data to save the Amazon's unique cetaceans
+++ FIELD INFORMATION +++ SIGN UP FOR THIS PROJECT +++
Pacaya-Samiria National Reserve, Peru ?Most people picture dolphins leaping from blue ocean waters, frolicking in large social groups behind passing boats. But there is another side to dolphins: elusive, solitary, lurking in the rivers of the Amazon rain forest. There are two species of river dolphin in the upper Amazon basin, the boto, or pink river dolphin (Inia geoffrensis), and the tucuxi, or gray river dolphin (Sotalia fluviatalis). Both of them are about two meters in length, with long smiling beaks and prominent foreheads. Their habits are as unknown as the shadowy rainforest rivers where they are top

For high-info sites, white, cream or similar is best in the background, because even white text is just too much hard work on other colours. But don't get carried away in an effort to jazz it up – stick to three or four closely-related colours and use them effectively, like Earthwatch (www.earthwatch.org).



Clean, lean and dynamic presentation at Guinness's site (www.guinness.ie). Black creates a dramatic background, but you still need to keep the number of extra colours down. Here it's just a few greens and oranges, and a beige. You could apply this scheme to just about anything.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bands a—z
music
shows
news
local
chat
AND THE WINNERS ARE...
Find out who won those cute lil' moonmen at the VMAs
VIDEO MUSIC AWARDS RECAP
Whew. It's over. So what happened?
ADAM SANDLER
It's an Adam Sandler overload! In a good way of course
NINE INCH NAILS
Trent Reznor sat down with MTV News' Kurt Loder for his first televised interview in a dog's age. Here's what the man had to say

A really dramatic entry from MTV (www.mtv.com). The background is a black and white photo, which is darkened to keep the text readable. Bright orange text makes the headlines stand out, and the simple three-colour scheme – black, white and orange – has a high impact.

Hints & tips

Colour matching
You can't see red text on green or green text on a red background.

Printing out
Remember if you want people to print out your pages a dark background with a light text will use all their printer toner and you won't be very popular.

because nothing clashes and white shows off pictures well. But it's not especially inspiring, so you'll have to get your drama in some other way – with superb graphics, striking headlines or fantastic photos, maybe. Stop off at Earthwatch Institute (www.earthwatch.org), where a minimal style throws in a bit of green and some superb pictures for a more impressive look than your standard black-on-white site.

But equally, you could try using pale cream (#FFFFCC), which makes for a warmer, softer background, pale blue (#CCFFFF), which gives a cool, crisp look, or another light colour. Text is still easily readable, pictures still look great, and you still have the option to use other colours.

Black, on the other hand – said to be the domain of the free speech contingent – makes for a dramatic background, but you need to be aware that text is harder to read. You're almost entirely limited to white and pale colours for your body text, and you can't get away with too much of it at that, but pictures look fantastic and you can cook up some superbly dramatic graphics and navigation widgets. Check out Guinness(www.guinness.ie) and Massive Attack (www.massiveattack.co.uk) for some good examples, or experiment with deep blue or maroon instead.

Bold backgrounds – intense red, blue, green and so on – are great in terms of drama, but you're instantly limited as to what other colours are going to work. Also text can be a real problem – it's the difference in brightness more than colour that governs how easy text is to read. But figure out something that works and you've

CD#7 1 Karmacoma (Album Version) 5.17
2 Karmacoma (Portishead Experience) 3.58 3 Karmacoma (Napoli Trip) 6.04 4 Karmacoma (U.N.K.L.E Situation) 5.37 5 Karmacoma (Bumper Ball Dub) 5.57 6 Karmacoma (Ventom Dub Special) 6.04 7 Blacksmith/Daydreaming 5.23
'Karmacoma' follows and kicks off with the Portishead Experience mix, by Geoff Barrow and Adrian utley. This is followed by the Napoli Trip mix, by Ben Young, featuring Italian band Almamegretta, the U.N.K.L.E Situation mix, by James Lavelle, T. Goldsworthy and M. Kudo, featuring DJ Shadow, the Bumper Ball Dub mix and the Ventom Dub Special mix (CD only), by the Mad Professor and finally the Baldsmith remix of Day dreaming (Cd only).
BOXSET
ALBUM
VIDEO

If you need to use a lot of colours, choose colours that are close to each other on the colour wheel, or varying shades of the same colour and your design will still work

stolen a lead in the impact stakes – check out Sink Digital Media (www.sink.ie), a cutting-edge Web design company, on how to make a red background look good by keeping it simple.

Go for a rainbow and you've shot yourself in the foot, like all those sites with swirly, marbly backgrounds. For sure, tile a background image – choose well and it can be striking – but keep the colour range small, so it doesn't spoil your words and graphics. It's in your interest to keep your visitors attention and if there's too much going on on the page or the colours are too glaring or loud you'll simply turn them off. Just remenber the favourite US adage KISS - Keep It Simple Studid. MTV Online (www.mtv.com) uses a darkened black-and-white photo for the background with orange, white and black text and graphics to great effect – and it's just a simple three-piece colour scheme. Or see Firetrap Asylum (www.firetrap.co.uk), which tiles a dramatic, reddened sky with white text and a black navigation bar – again, a simple three-colour scheme.

Once you have decided on the colours to use for your background and text, the rest of the process follows easily, as long as you keep it simple. Start with just two colours besides your text and background. If you are working on black, try red and yellow. If you then need more colours, don't go for a blue because this will muck everything up. Instead, keep the colour scheme tight and use an orange or a paler red – this will work better with black red and yellow. Work with neighbouring colours to the ones that you already have, and you can't go wrong.

It really is that simple. Take various colour palettes from Web sites (see Tips and tricks section) and experiment with them. Once you have used and abused them at will, then get creative with your own colour schemes. And have fun. If your colours look inspiring, visitors to your Web site will be inspired, and that's what makes them want to come back. ■

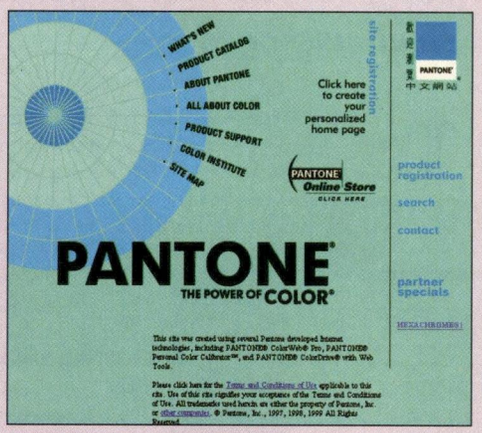
Colours in code vs graphics

A Web page is made up of mostly two visual elements: HTML with live text and backgrounds, and graphics in JPEG or GIF format which browsers display in-line. Since you have to make these in separate applications (using an HTML author like FrontPage and a graphics package like Paint Shop Pro or Photoshop) it's tempting to be lazy about using the same colour scheme for each. Wade through the search engines to find a million culprits. But don't be lazy. Sites that look good are sites that get background, text and graphics flowing together, so it's not immediately obvious that they're different. You'll need to do some planning to get this right, because colour works differently in HTML and graphics.

HTML describes colours in hex, such as #000000 for black or #FF9900 for pure orange. The numbers, which run from 0 to F, are in pairs. The first pair describes the amount of red in the colour, the second green, and the last blue. These are the figures you put in your <body> and <font> tags to set what colour the background and text should be.

In graphics, for the screen at least, colours are usually described in RGB – again representing red, green and blue, but this time from 0 to 255. So, black is 0,0,0 and the same pure orange is 255,153,0. The colour palette in your graphics app shows these values.

So what you need to do is get your colour scheme, then get the two different sets of values for describing the colours.



Use the same colours for your graphics and your HTML text and backgrounds for a seamless look, and a far slicker, less confusing site

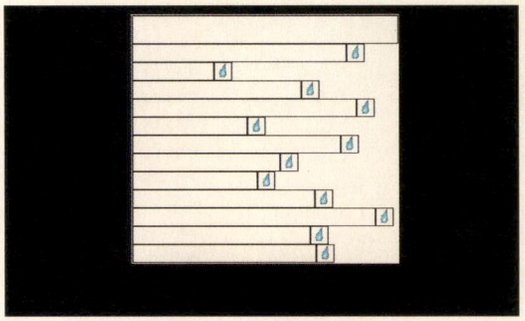
It's probably easiest to do this in your graphics package, partly because it's easier to work out how colours work together in a graphics package and, more importantly, because your graphics package should be able to translate the RGB into hex values for you. In Photoshop, use the drop-down in your colour palette and click Web Sliders. In Ulead PhotoImpact, the hex values are displayed right next to the RGB. In Paint Shop Pro 5, select File, then Preferences, then General Program Preferences. Hit the Dialogs and Palettes tab and check Hexadecimal Display in the Colour Palette box.

This way, you can create your logo and other graphics on the right background colour, then take the colours you used for these into your HTML and reuse for the text, links, backgrounds, and so on. Some HTML packages enable you to create your own hex colour palette, such as Adobe GoLive. But if yours doesn't, it's easy to create one in an HTML file – just colour a few words of text with each of your hex values in your site template. And the result? A more striking, consistent and professional look.

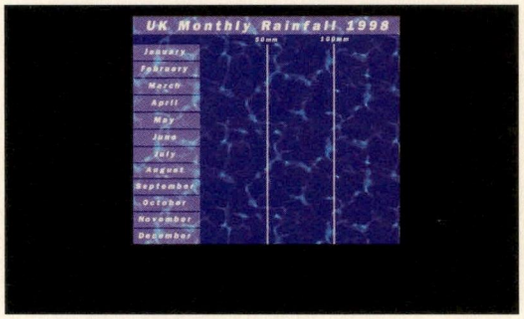
Single-pixel GIFs

Single-pixel transparent and coloured images can radically improve the design of your Web page. Mike Down shows that good things do come in small packages

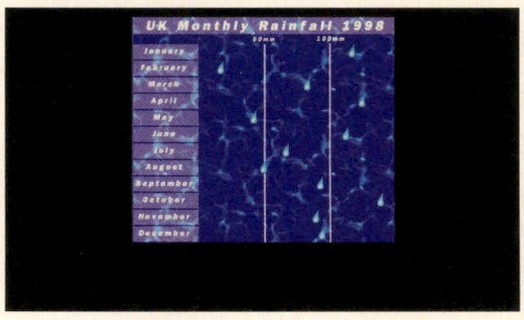
The single pixel transparent GIF is the most flexible tool in the Web developer's toolbox. Without resorting to DHTML, the use of a transparent GIF really is the only way to discretely control the layout of text and graphics on the page. No matter where you place the transparent GIF on the page, it will remain unseen, with all background graphics and fills remaining completely untouched.



Doesn't look very inspiring, does it? We have switched the border attribute to 1 pixel size so that the position of the transparent GIF spacers (to the left of each raindrop) can be seen



To make the chart look more appealing, we created this graphic by using a tiled water graphic with a mixture of tints and text for the title and axes



Put the two together and voilà! the raindrops with their transparent borders superimpose the background chart seamlessly

Creating and using the GIFs

The first step is to create the 1-pixel GIFs. The coloured GIFs are straightforward. Use your preferred image editor to create a single-pixel graphic and fill with a colour from the browser-safe palette. At this stage, setting the colour depth to two colours will ensure that the minimum size is achieved. Then save the file in GIF format. Transparent GIFs are created in much the same way, except for specifying the background to be transparent either on creation or in the GIF89a export options (GIF87 doesn't support transparency).

The transparent GIF we have used in these examples is only 43 bytes in size and once loaded into the browser's cache it is there for use throughout the rest of the site.

To use the GIF, simply use the <IMG SRC> tag and specify the sizing you require. If you wish to pad out a space 50 pixels wide by 1 pixel deep, use the following:

```
<IMG SRC=transparent.GIF
width=50 height=1>
```

Power to your text

Text placement is a notoriously difficult affair in HTML. The mark-up language was never intended to provide tools for graphic designers – it was to be used to present information quickly. Here are some ways to spruce up your text.

Indents

To provide an indent at the beginning of a paragraph, simply insert a stretched transparent GIF in front of the first word. So to produce a 10-pixel indent, use:

```
<IMG SRC="transparent.GIF" HEIGHT="10" WIDTH="10"
BORDER="0" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="CENTER" >
```

A resized single pixel can be used to indent whole chapters, but in most cases it would be better to use tables or table cells.

Character spacing

To get extra spacing, L I K E T H I S, you'll only need to put a small GIF (say 10-pixel width) in between each character. This can be useful for headline and title text on pages.

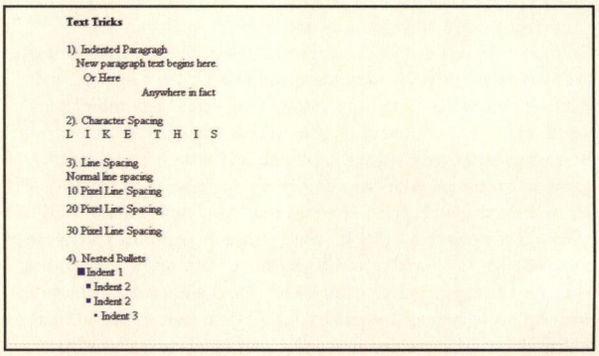
Line spacing

Equally useful is the ability to add extra space between lines of text by choosing the line spacing in terms of pixels required and setting the <HEIGHT> tag for your transparent GIF.

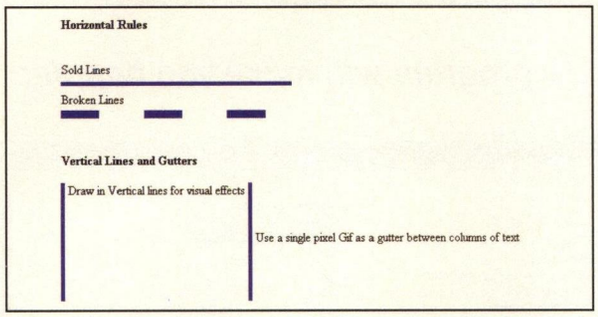
Lists

Single-pixel gifs can even help you to get neat control over lists (with or without bullets). You cannot rely on the list commands – Unordered <UL>, Ordered <OL> or Definition <DL> List tags. Instead of using these why don't you try adding clear space with the stretched GIF and then use a single-coloured pixel as a resizeable bullet. It works really well. You can even change the bullet dimensions according to indentation and maintain position by using the <HSPACE> and <VSPACE> attributes, as shown in the code below:

```
<IMG SRC="transparent.GIF" HEIGHT="10" WIDTH="20"
BORDER="0" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="CENTER" >
<IMG SRC="blue1x1.GIF" HEIGHT="6" WIDTH="6"
BORDER="0" HSPACE="2" ALIGN="CENTER" >
```



Use a transparent single-pixel GIF to take control over text placement or add bullets with pixel level control


Horizontal Rules
Sold Lines
Broken Lines
Vertical Lines and Gutters
Draw in Vertical lines for visual effects
Use a single pixel Gif as a gutter between columns of text

Create horizontal, vertical and dashed lines in any colour you like from a single-pixel coloured graphic (JPEG or GIF)

Drawing the line

Why use a graphic when horizontal rules are already included in the HTML language? The Horizontal Rule <HR> tag works but has limitations. If you want coloured rules, instead use a stretched graphic for much better cross-browser compatibility. Height, width and colour are all variable if you use this technique and the only feature you lose is the 3D shading effects available with the <HR> tag, which isn't much of a loss:

Horizontal Line <IMG SRC="blue1x1.GIF" HEIGHT="5" WIDTH="300" BORDER="0" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="CENTER" >

Vertical lines are created in the same way as horizontal. Horizontal rules and gutters can be applied individually and can be of mixed size and colour.

Vertical Line <IMG SRC="blue1x1.GIF" HEIGHT="150" WIDTH="5" BORDER="0" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="TOP" >

Chart-tastic

This example chart illustrates well the flexibility of using image placement with transparent GIFs.

The objective is to produce a chart that shows rainfall for each month by placing a water droplet image (raindrop.GIF) over a watery background. We produced a table in Excel with monthly rainfall figures and calculated pixel offsets for the droplets so they would fit a 400-pixel-width backdrop.

Month	Rainfall (mm)	Pixel Offset
J	117.4	335
F	17.3	135
M	83.4	267
A	124.9	350
M	42.3	185
J	112.9	326
J	67.1	234
A	49.6	199
S	93.4	287
O	138.7	377
N	89.6	279
D	94	288

To produce the graph, first create a table and set padding, spacing and borders to zero:

<TABLE WIDTH="400" BORDER="0"ALIGN="CENTER" CELLPADDING="0" CELLSPACING="0">
A single-table data cell is filled with the watery background image (graphback.jpg), again with padding and spacing set to zero:

<TD BACKGROUND="graphback.jpg" CELLPADDING="0" CELLSPACING="0">

To complete, each of the 12 monthly rainfall points to be plotted is placed on top of the background. The offset for the raindrop is provided by the WIDTH of the transparent GIF spacer, after which the raindrop.jpg graphic is placed:

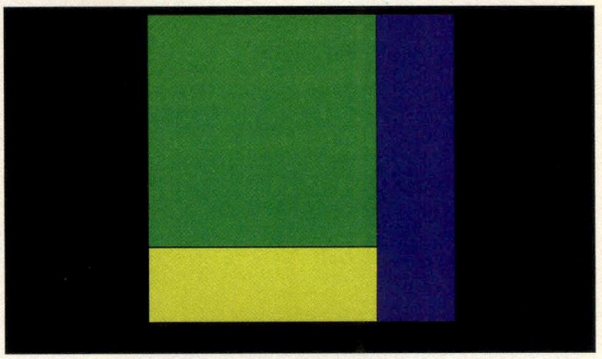
<IMG SRC="transparent.GIF" HEIGHT="25" WIDTH="322" BORDER="0" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="LEFT" >
<IMG SRC="raindrop.GIF" HEIGHT="25" WIDTH="25" BORDER="0" ALT="January 117.4mm" HSPACE="0" ALIGN="LEFT" >

While testing, we found it useful to temporarily turn the BORDER value to 1 so that the transparent GIF placements could be seen. One interesting thing about this chart is that, as with all background tiles, the tile only sizes to fit the actual size of table that the browser has rendered. This means, for example, that if only the lines for January to March are specified, the background image and table reduce in size to fit.

Surely all of this could be done more easily in your favourite graphics package and stored as a single graphic with a lot less fuss, you might ask. True, but this can be reused – and what if the data is dynamic so you don't know what it is yet? It would be very easy to link the chart data to an online data source and have it change every day or even every minute.

Navigation menus

The methods used here are equally applicable to the design of navigation areas of your site which consist of separate graphic elements, each with their own link and <ALT> tag assignments. Although image maps can be used for navigation areas, in most cases the downside of this is that you lose the larger individual graphical elements and the <ALT> tag which can be helpful to the user interface. ■



Here, three animated single-pixel GIFs are stretched to form a cube and placed in a single table. You'll have to believe that it looks better in the flesh than in print

Hints & tips

Tips for tables

When using tables for page layout, use a single-pixel transparent GIF stretched to the width of each column. Then even if your table cells have no other content, the layout will be consistent – even in Navigator.

Recommended sites

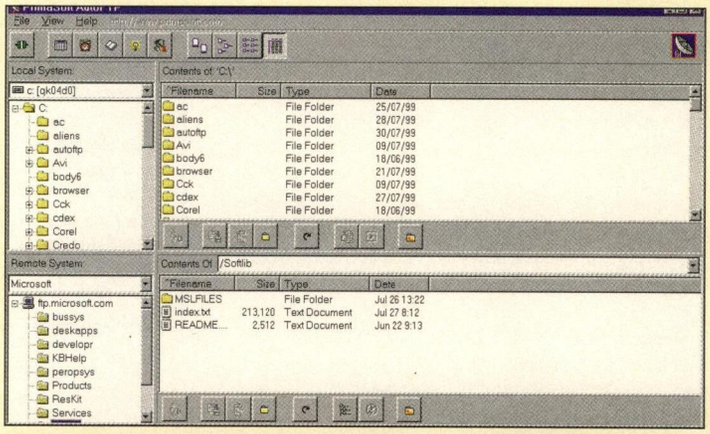
WEB REVIEW
http://webreview.com/wr/pub/98/01/02/feature/sidebar.html
A great site for general information on Web design in general, but it also includes an excellent tutorial on the use of single-pixel images for site layout.

HERRON SCHOOL OF ART
www.herron.iupui.edu/default.html
This is a site that's well worth a visit. It's a visually stunning site that effectively demonstrates the range of what can be achieved quite simply with the help of the single-pixel trick.

MUFFIN-HEAD
www.muffinhead.com
You'll never have seen a main navigation menu like this before. The main page is made up almost entirely of single-pixel animated GIFs with just the <ALT> tags providing the link information – not intuitive, but it works.

Which FTP program?

You can do FTP with your browser, but a dedicated FTP program will make you happier



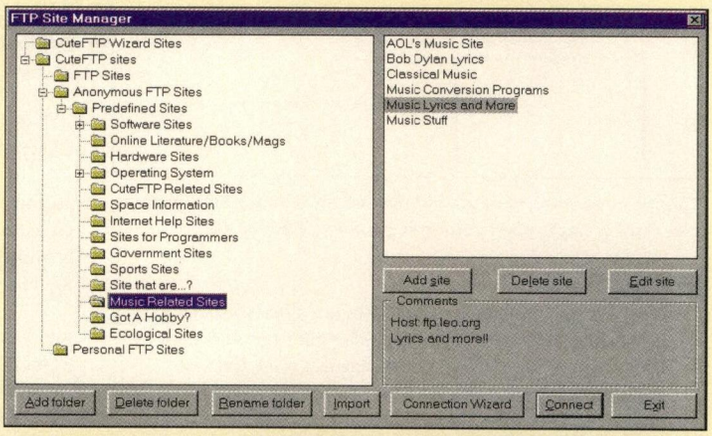
AUTOFTP PRO

AutoFTP Pro looks comfortingly like Windows Explorer, so you immediately feel you know how to use it. Beginners will appreciate the simplicity.

Manual operation is straightforward because AutoFTP can remember your user name and password for each site. You can also save transfer sets – lists of everything you want to upload or download. If you transfer the same files regularly (the pages of your site), this is a great time-saver.

A great feature is the scheduler. You can set up AutoFTP to do all your file transfers overnight, taking advantage of faster connections and lower call charges. The program automatically dials your ISP, uploads or downloads files and disconnects when it's done. If the connection is too slow, you can configure AutoFTP to abort the transfer and try again.

Developed by: *Primasoft*
On the Web: *www.primasoft.com*
Price: *Free with banner ads*
Graphical interface: *Yes*
Upload wizard: *No*
Scheduler: *Yes*
Rating: ★★★☆☆



CUTEFTP 3.0

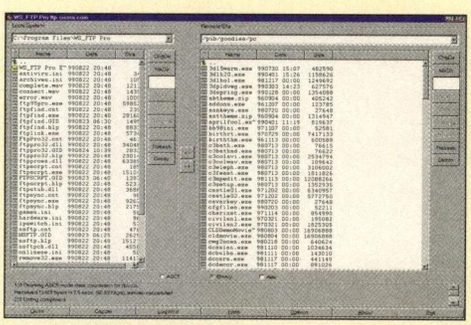
Now at version 3.0, CuteFTP not only has a host of options for the expert FTP user but also provides wizards to help the beginner.

We especially like the integration with Windows Explorer. Right-click on a file for a new CuteFTP Upload option, making uploading very natural and easy. Another common task involves downloading an HTML page, editing it and then uploading it again. CuteFTP cuts down the operations with remote file editing – you can change the document without having to download it.

Extra touches are everywhere you look. CuteFTP not only resumes broken downloads but also continues failed uploads, if the server permits.

There's even an HTML editor, so the only downside is the lack of a scheduler.

Developed by: *GlobalSCAPE*
On the Web: *www.cuteftp.com*
Price: *$39.95 (about £25)*
Graphical interface: *Yes*
Upload wizard: *No*
Scheduler: *No*
Rating: ★★★★☆

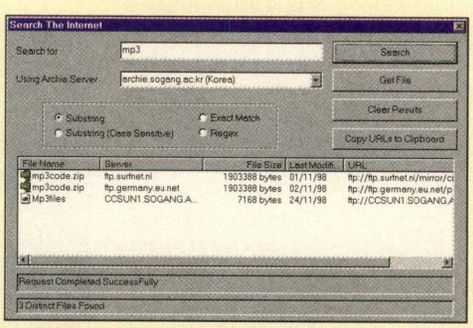


WS-FTP PRO 6.01

A customised Explorer window helps make basic operations natural and intuitive, but try to do anything more complex using the Classic interface and you're likely to be confused.

The feature set isn't terribly impressive. It copes with the basics as you'd expect, but that's about it. A Scripting program enables you to write macros to automate FTP operation, while the Synchronize utility is intended to help you mirror a directory structure on your page, on to the remote FTP server. While these all work, their interfaces are poor and having to load separate programs for each function just adds to the confusion.

Developed by: *Ipswitch, Inc*
On the Web: *www.ipswitch.com*
Price: *$37.50 (about £23)*
Graphical interface: *Yes*
Upload wizard: *No*
Scheduler: *No*
Rating: ★★☆☆☆



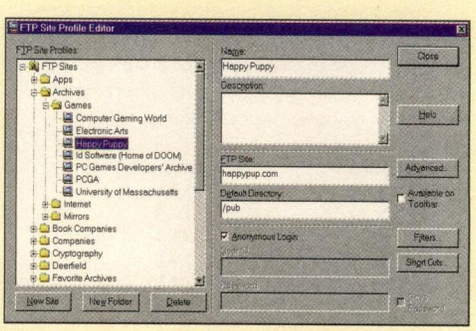
TERRAPIN FTP 2.3

Terrapin FTP initially looks very familiar, with a Windows Explorer-like graphical interface, drag-and-drop support, resumption of broken downloads, and so on.

Dig deeper, though, and you discover clever ideas such as the Site Map – Terrapin collects information about the server's directory structure and files.

Terrapin also checks the links in your HTML pages to make sure they're still valid. It can also look for orphans – files that aren't referenced anywhere in your pages and so might just be taking up space. It's an FTP program with a little bit more.

Developed by: *Terrapin*
On the Web: *www.terra-net.com*
Price: *£19.95*
Graphical interface: *Yes*
Upload wizard: *Yes*
Scheduler: *No*
Rating: ★★★★☆



FTP VOYAGER 6.1.0.2

FTP Voyager hits a good balance between ease of use for a beginner and the depth necessary for the expert user. It has Windows Explorer-style appearance but is also customisable.

You'll find less common features such as remote file editing and site-to-site transfers. You can even browse other FTP sites while transfers occur in the background.

The FTP Voyager Site Manager is well designed and extremely useful. The lack of macros and a scheduler is a shame, but this remains a more than adequate FTP client for most people. ■

Developed by: *Deerfield Communications, Inc*
On the Web: *www.ftpvoyager.com*
Price: *$37.95 (about £24)*
Graphical interface: *Yes*
Upload wizard: *No*
Scheduler: *No*
Rating: ★★★☆☆

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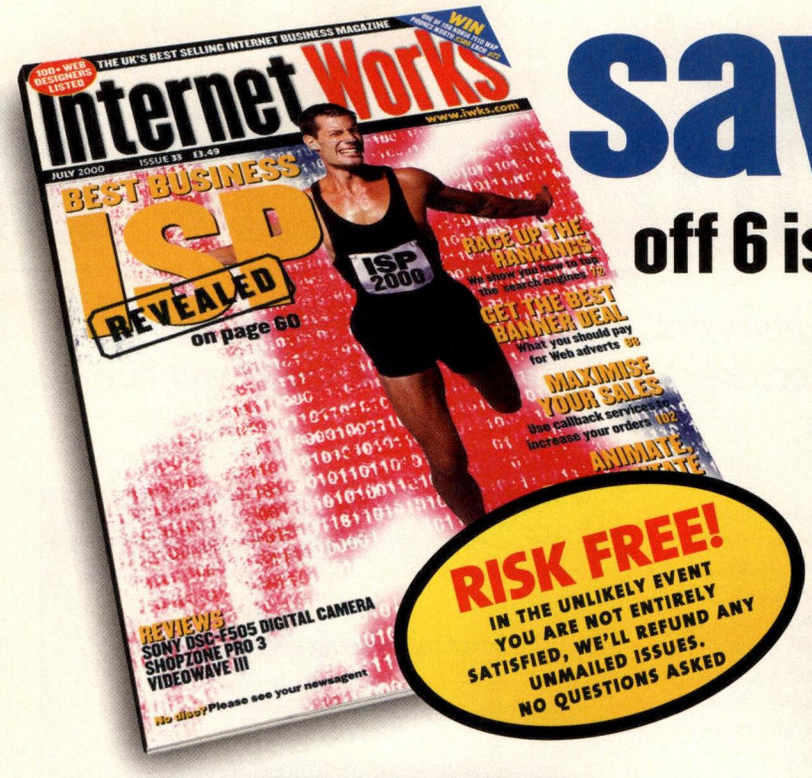
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Polishing your si

Now you've added text, graphics and links to your Web pages, the next step is to check that your document works. ***Karl Hodge*** *shows you how to polish up your Web page*

Hints & tips

View the source

Use Source View in Internet Explorer to look at and directly edit the HTML script of your pages in Windows Notepad. Go to View then Source or File then Edit with Windows Notepad.

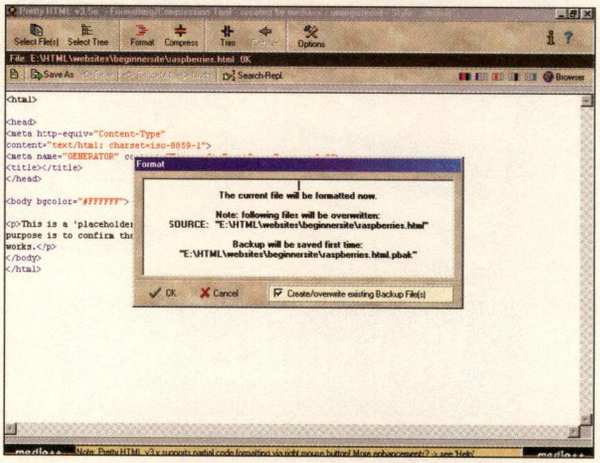
As you know, drag-and-drop Web editing applications hide most of the HTML code that creates your page. Sometimes to get the job done, you have to edit the code manually. Before you start to worry, you may be pleasantly surprised to find you know more about HTML than you realise. As we've progressed through adding text, tables, graphics and links to pages, the program has written much of the code for you, but you've been the one typing in parameters and browsing for links. If you look at the script for your pages, you'll probably find you understand a fair amount of it – which is good, because we're now going to clean it up.

Mopping up

Drag-and-drop Web editing applications are great for putting pages together quickly and easily. One problem most of them share, though, is they can produce 'messy' HTML. Even FrontPage Express is no exception – it places comments in your code that may not be required, uses syntax specific to Microsoft browsers that Netscape Navigator may not understand, and it formats code in a way that can be hard to read. You may think that as long as your pages work, none of this actually matters, and that's true to an extent. However, if you want pages that are compatible with multiple platforms and easier to edit at a later date, it's worth spending some time cleaning them up before you send them on their merry way.

Grab your sponge

Luckily you can also fix a multitude of problems without having to touch the code yourself, given the right software. HTML Validator

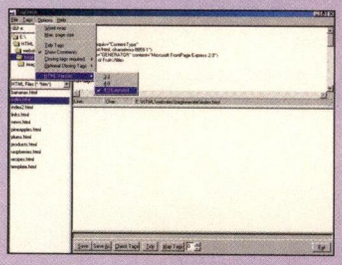


Pretty HTML formats page scripts so that they're readable – including placing explanatory comments. You'll find it at http://mpp.at/pretty/index.htm

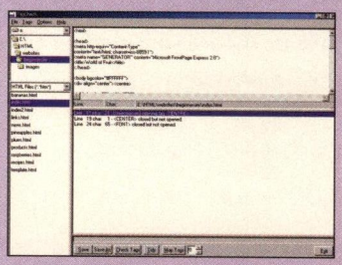
Lite checks that your pages comply with the current published specifications for HTML. If they don't, the program tells you what's wrong so you can work out how to fix it. HTML Validator also doubles as a simple HTML editor that lets you insert new HTML tags and format page scripts. The Quick Uppercase option in the tools menu is particularly useful for FrontPage Express users. It converts all HTML tags into uppercase, making them easier to read.

Using TagCheck to clean up pages

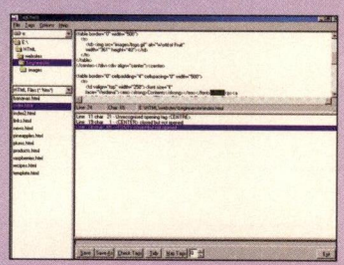
TagCheck, from TaFWeb Software, provides you with a quick and easy way to clean up your HTML documents Download it free from (www.tafweb.com/tagcheck.html).



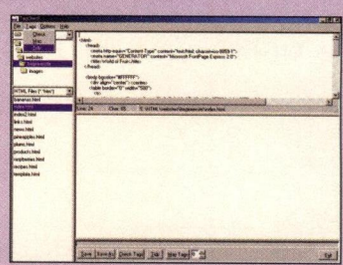
1 *Download TagCheck and, using the Explorer pane on the left of the screen, navigate to your Web page which will be called something like 'index.html'. Double-click on index.html to open it in TagCheck. Go to Options then HTML Version and choose 4.0 Extended.*



2 *Go to Tags, then Check. TagCheck goes through the document and highlights several mistakes. A common mistake is an 'Unrecognised Opening Tag <CENTRE>'. (British spelling is not recognised.) Double-click the line to highlight the error in the HTML file.*

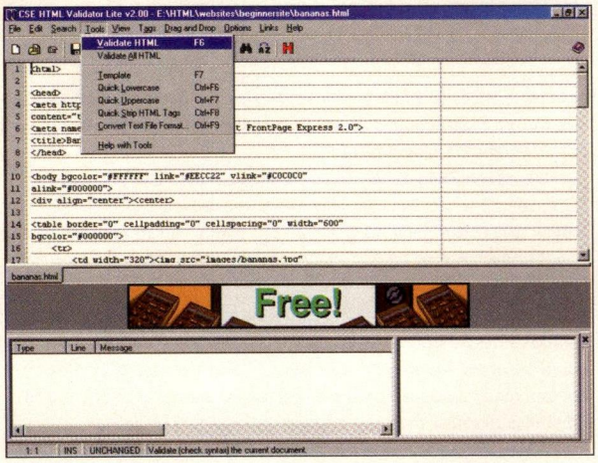


3 *Change the tag so that it reads <CENTER> instead, then redo the tag check. Another common mistake is having an extra closing </FONT> tag that's not required. Double-click on it in the error window, then remove it from the HTML document.*



4 *Finally, to make the HTML code more readable, go to Tags Tidy. This goes through the document and indents the code according to how it is 'nested. This will make it easier to identify individual elements within the script if you have to go back and edit it later.*

te

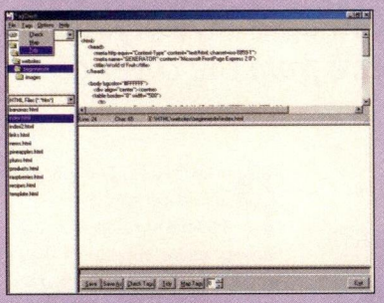


HTML Validator Lite is the free version of the more sophisticated HTML Validator 4.0. Both can be found at the HTML Validator home page (www.htmlvalidator.com)

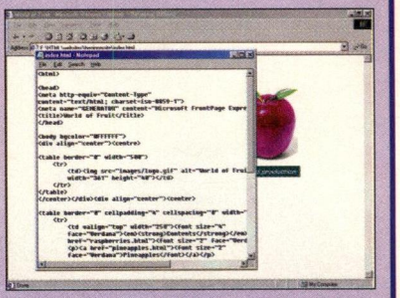
Pretty HTML is another downloadable program that can make your scripts leaner and better behaved. Although it doesn't try to verify code, it can automatically reformat it so you can see what's what – this makes it easier to edit by hand. At the opposite end of the spectrum, Pretty HTML can also 'compress' the HTML in a page by removing all unnecessary line breaks. Some designers use this technique in an attempt to make their pages download faster, although the savings are negligible.

The best tool for beginners to use is made by a UK software company. TagCheck helps you make sure the code in your pages complies with HTML standards and can fix problems for you automatically if you wish. We show you how to get started with it in the step-by-step guides below. ■

You can use multiple tags to build up formatting. Text that is both bold and italic would be formatted like this: <B><I>Bold and Italic Text</I></B>



Most HTML follows these basic rules. To make text bold in a document, you place it between 'bold' tags that look like this: <B>Bold Text</B>



You can use multiple tags to build up formatting. Text that is both bold and italic would be formatted like this: <B><I>Bold and Italic Text</I></B>

Well, we've managed to build an entire Web site using FrontPage Express with only a cursory mention of HTML so far. Now it's time to play catch up because you need to understand a little bit about how HTML works before you can get the most from the clean-up packages that we've mentioned.

To begin with, HTML is much easier to understand than you might think. The letters stand for HyperText Mark-up Language, which might give you a clue; it's not a fully-fledged programming language, it's a scripting language for describing document layouts. All HTML documents have two main elements. The first is content, which can be text, graphics, or in some cases multimedia. In FrontPage Express the content of the page is the only bit you see. The second element describes how this content is placed in a page, how it's formatted, and so on – and these are called 'tags'. For example, to describe the font applied to an area of text, we use a special font tag: <FONT>. Most tags have additional arguments that let you define what the tag does. The following tag simply defines the typeface applied to the text that follows it as 'Arial': <FONT FACE = "Arial">

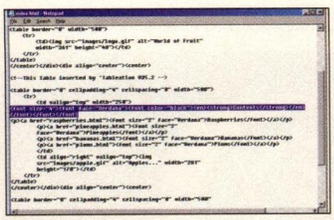
One final point to make is that most HTML tags have to be 'closed' after use to show that they apply only to a certain area within a document. The closing tag looks like the opening tag, except that it has a forward slash in front of it. So when applied to a sentence, the combination of content and HTML would look like this:

<FONT FACE = "Arial">This a sentence that would appear with the font 'Arial' on a Web page</FONT>

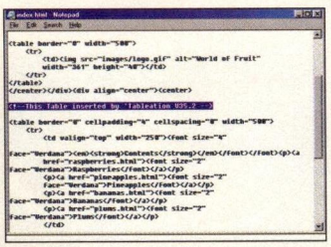
The only exception is that some special tags don't need to be closed. <IMG>, the tag used to place graphics in a page, doesn't need a closing tag. Neither does <META>, the tag used to embed information about the document.

Clean up pages by hand

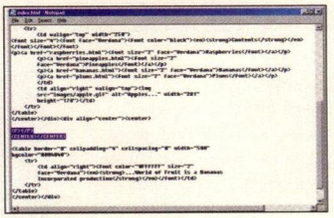
Here are four things to look for in HTML files that you can clean up by hand (if you're feeling brave!).



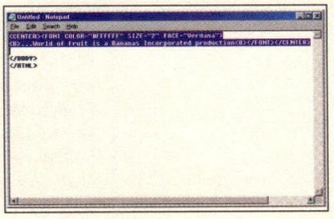
1 ***Applying lots of different styles to text can generate a separate <FONT> tag for each parameter. You can end up with three or four <FONT> tags for one section of text. These can usually be edited down to one by placing all the arguments (COLOR, SIZE, FACE, etc.) within the same <FONT> tag.***



2 ***Some drag-and-drop software applications generate comments within the HTML code that aren't actually necessary to the document. Look for lines that begin with these tags: <!— and end with: —>. These comment tags can be safely deleted without breaking the flow of the Web page.***



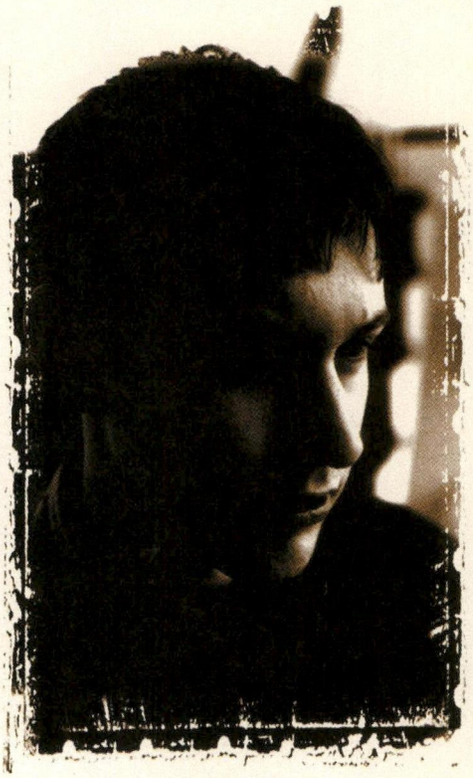
3 ***Look for empty tags and remove them. An empty tag is one that doesn't have any content in it – paragraph tags are the main culprits and they tend to crop up all over the place. They look like this: <P></P>. Replace them with: <BR>. This is the tag that you should use to insert a line break.***



4 ***Remember that HTML tags use American spellings when you edit documents directly. Browsers won't recognise the parameter COLOUR or the alignment tag <CENTRE> – but they do know what COLOR and <CENTER> are. Check that you have used US spelling in your Web page.***

THE GALLERY

Practical Web Pages investigates how a student set up an impressive Web site using software from the cover CD of a magazine



PHILLY MAUDE

Philly Maude got his Web site up and running in just six weeks with software from the cover CD of a magazine

Philly Maude, an undergraduate art student from Middlesborough, recently showed us his impressive Web site which he put together using software which he installed from the cover CD of a magazine.

Philly was new to the Internet – until he bought the magazine that is. "I didn't know much about the Internet at the time so I bought a beginner's magazine in my local WHSmith store." says Philly. "The cover CD included Microsoft's FrontPage Express and free Internet access with Virgin Net. I used the cover CD to get online in April and got my Web site up and running by the beginning of June."

"I did the Web site for a two-week college project," he told us. "My design teacher had originally suggested that I put my work on to a CD as an interactive digital portfolio, but I decided to make it into a Web site because then people would have access to it twenty four hours a day and I wouldn't have to send out CDs to showcase my work."

Well, it certainly didn't take him long to put quite an impressive home page together. We asked him how he did it. "I decided to use FrontPage Express because it's a straightforward software package. It's just like using a Windows Word Processor. I also used Adobe Photoshop (a graphics package) and a scanner – that's it! I followed a step-by-step guide to building a Web site from a magazine and found that FrontPage Express worked well considering it's a free program."

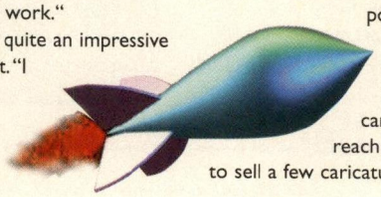
We asked Philly if he ran into any problems as a beginner. "Uploading the site was actually the hardest thing to do. It took longer to get the thing on the Internet than it did to make it! But now I know how to do it, and I've got the right software, even that is easy to do."

Philly drew the splendid graphics he used for the Web site using Adobe's Photoshop program but thinks that any paint program could be used. "I saved the logos as GIF files because they didn't contain many colours. For the larger titles and my artwork I used JPEG files because they can contain more than 256 colours.

"With FrontPage Express I could only put graphics on lines of text, which meant that I couldn't wrap the text round the pictures, so it had to be designed in a more spaced out way. I also couldn't use more than one space between words, so I filled in the spaces with other words that were the same colour as the background to make them 'invisible'. It was a little crude, maybe, but it helped format all the text and pictures the way I wanted it."

Philly is now a big fan of the Internet. "It's really great, despite the huge phone bills I've been getting! I've found that you just can't beat the Internet when it comes to research. Whatever you're looking for will probably be there, but finding it can sometimes be a bit of a problem!

"It also works well as a publicity tool. It's so much easier to showcase your work by putting it online. I used to have to buy an expensive portfolio, trudge around meeting people in person, or post colour photocopies to potential clients which worked out really expensive after paying for postage as well. Now all I have to do is give people my Web site address and they can see my work instantly. My illustrations can reach a much wider audience and I've even managed to sell a few caricatures which is great news!" ■



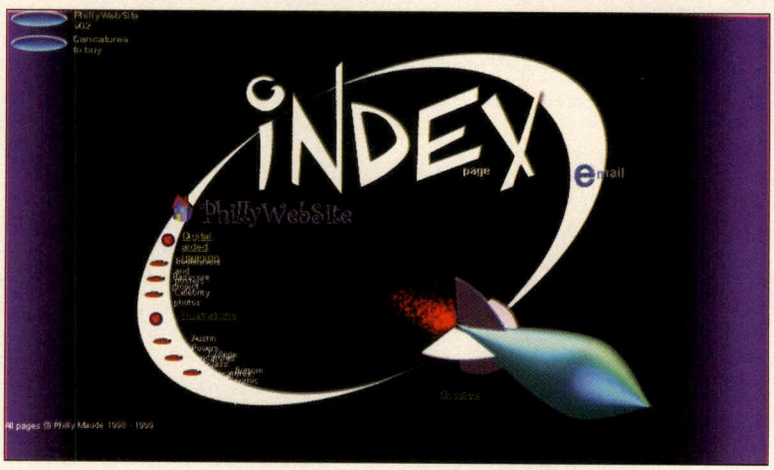
And here it is...

PHILLY WEB SITE

freespace.virgin.net/philly.m

Philly's Web site is a great example of what you can do with a small Web page building package, some graphics software, and a bit of imagination. It showcases a wide selection of his artwork and provides an email link for anyone who'd like to get in touch with him, as well as a number of links to other art Web sites.

The artwork itself is a mixture of digitally-aided images and illustrations. The illustrations range from caricatures of celebrities such as Austin Powers (Mike Myers) to ones of Philly's college chums. And visitors are offered the opportunity to have personal caricatures done – for a fee, of course.

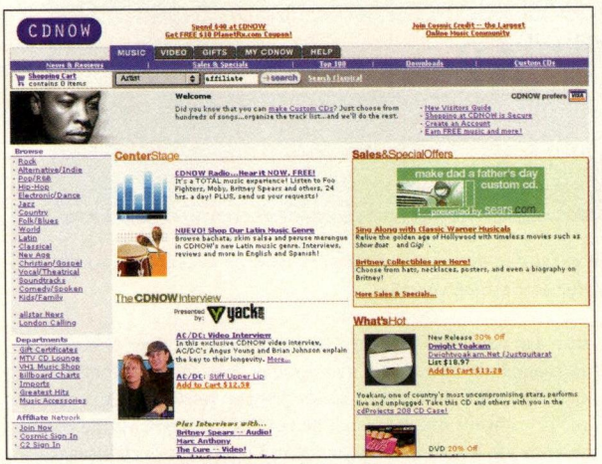


Make money from your site

Want to earn money from your Web site? Then enter the world of e-commerce by joining an associates or affiliates programme. Ian Harris shows you how

Now that your site is up and running, the next thing to do is find out how you can get it to earn its keep. Too many Web masters seem content to let their creations loaf about the Web, draining their creator's time and money. It's no secret that there's serious cash to be made on the Net and the chances are your Web site is more than capable of paying its own way. We'll be looking at how affiliate schemes offer you the chance to earn money by promoting somebody else's goods. Affiliate schemes are being run in ever-increasing numbers by e-commerce giants such as Amazon.com and CDNow.com. Joining one makes you an affiliate, and they're open to anyone with a half-decent Web site.

The whole concept is best described as 'virtual product placement' – you place an advertisement on your site in the form of a banner or a text link, hoping visitors will 'click through' and spend money on your parent site. Tracking software then identifies which affiliate site sent it to the customer before dishing out anything between five and 30 per cent sales commission, depending on the terms of your associate scheme. Companies running associate schemes now number in the hundreds, enabling you to shop around to find one selling goods most likely to tempt your visitors. Signing up is generally a cinch, with most schemes generating HTML code to paste into your pages, and visually these can take the form of anything from a simple text link to a small box containing a price list and product search engine. It means that all you have to do is collect the code and put it on your site.



As a member of the CDNow associates programme you can collect credits against CD purchases

Pulling power

In case all this is sounding like easy money, it's worth pointing out that the size of your commission cheque will always be limited by one key factor – your site's traffic. Associate programmes aren't get-rich-quick schemes. Indeed it's thought that for every 1,000 people

Hints & tips

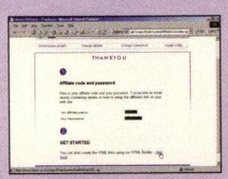
You can also make money from your Web site by joining a banner ad scheme *see page 56*

As easy as ABC

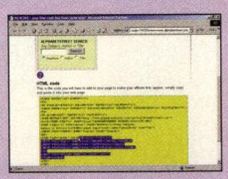
Once you've cleared out a space among that HTML hash you call a Web site, you'll be wanting to know how to add that golden link. Here's how the signup procedure works at Alphabet Street (www.alphabetstreet.com/).

1 AlphabetStreet's affiliate section is signposted from a link on the front page. The associates side of things is handled by a separate division, InFront.co.uk, but you shouldn't let that put you off.

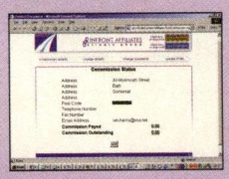
2 Joining the program simply involved giving our personal details, and information about our Web site. You're even asked who to make the cheque payable to. Exciting, isn't it?



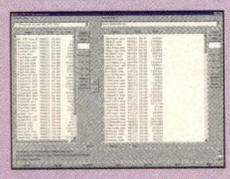
3 Once you've submitted those details, you become an AlphabetStreet affiliate. The affiliate code and password are needed for you to access your account to see how much you've earned.



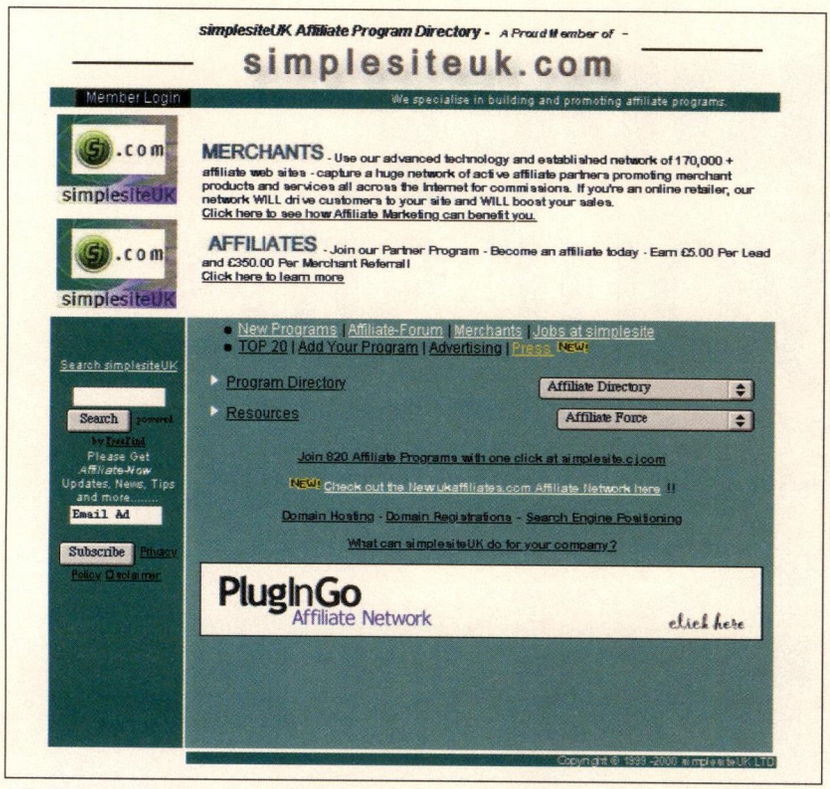
4 AlphabetStreet lets us choose which of the nifty searchbox to use. The HTML in the yellow box can be pasted into any Web site, though getting it in the right spot can be trial and error.



5 Once the affiliate link is in place, you can check back to your account to find out how much you're owed at any time simply by logging in to the affiliates section of AlphabetStreet.



We found the Alphabet associate program on Mark Welch's Adbility site (www.adbility.com). It promises to pay between five per cent and 15 per cent commission to its affiliates.


simplesiteUK Affiliate Program Directory - A Proud Member of -
simplesiteuk.com
Member Login
We specialise in building and promoting affiliate programs.
MERCHANTS - Use our advanced technology and established network of 170,000 + affiliate web sites - capture a huge network of active affiliate partners promoting merchant products and services all across the Internet for commissions. If you're an online retailer, our network WILL drive customers to your site and WILL boost your sales.
Click here to see how Affiliate Marketing can benefit you.
AFFILIATES - Join our Partner Program - Become an affiliate today - Earn £5.00 Per Lead and £350.00 Per Merchant Referral!
Click here to learn more
New Programs | Affiliate-Forum | Merchants | Jobs at simplesite
TOP 20 | Add Your Program | Advertising | Press
Search simplesiteUK
Search
Program Directory
Affiliate Directory
Resources
Affiliate Force
Join 820 Affiliate Programs with one click at simplesite.com
Check out the Newukaffiliates.com Affiliate Network here !!
Domain Hosting - Domain Registrations - Search Engine Positioning
What can simplesiteUK do for your company?
PlugInGo
Affiliate Network
click here
Please Get Affiliate-Now Updates, News, Tips and more.....
Email Ad
Subscribe
Privacy Policy
Disclaimer
Copyright © 1999 -2000 simplesiteUK LTD

Simplesiteuk.com has an extensive list of the associates scheme available from UK sites. So if you're looking for something specific...

that visit your site, less than five actually dig out their credit cards and spend money through your 'golden link', so if your online creation only pulls in 50 or so visitors per week, it doesn't take a genius to figure out you won't be retiring just yet. Cashpile.com recently ran a survey and found that 32 per cent of affiliates make between $1 and $100 per month, with just 18 per cent earning ever $500 per month. It's very much a percentages game – the more eyeballs you pull in, the more sales will slip through your site. Most Web masters are disappointed with their affiliate payouts, but there are a few tips to bear in mind to maximise your chance of success. First, the nature of the scheme you sign up to will enormously affect your success rate, so before taking the plunge, some careful consideration is in order. The huge number of programs operating across the Web leaves no excuse for anybody trying to force inappropriate products on to disinterested punters – so flogging Beanie Babies to an audience of amateur astronomers or the entire Step's discography to fans of the Chemical Brothers is not on. We found hundreds of categorised schemes at simplesite UK (www.simplesite.co.uk), although Mark Welch's Adbility (www.adbility.com) has more, with comments on each to boot.

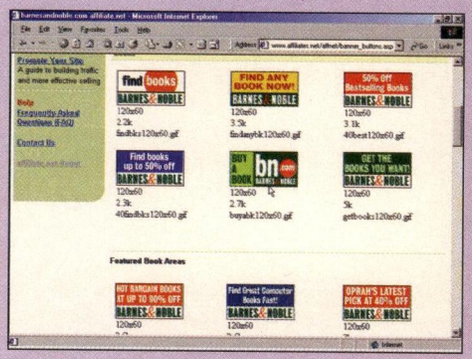
Think before you sign. Books and music can prove to be sure-fire successes because they tend to produce more impulse buys than larger, more expensive items, although if you can find a more exciting program such as Men's Health's Viagra store (www.menshealthonline.com) then by all means go ahead. You're likely to have some control over exactly how your site is hyperlinked to its affiliate parent, so it's wise to plan a tempting route through the store for your visitors. Plonking them at the front page is much less likely to result in an impulse purchase (and beefy commission for you) than a well-placed jump to a category or section relevant to your Web site.

Presentation also counts for a lot. Visitors get suspicious of 'banner farms' – sites that seem to exist solely to serve up sponsored links – so don't pepper your affiliate links too thickly across every page. An outdoors or activity Web site could review the latest rambling or climbing books, and then use its associates program to link to the same item on Amazon. Your goal is still selling a book, but reviewing the product makes this less obvious to your visitors.

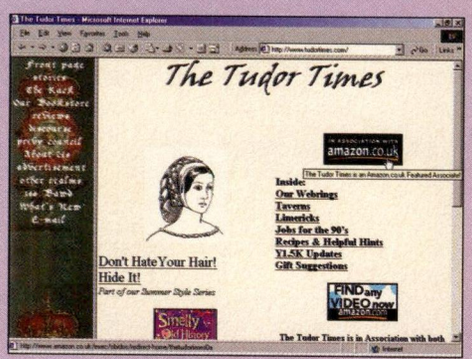
By far the best guide through the jungle of associate plans is Associate Programs (www.associateprograms.co.uk). All the UK schemes are listed, categorised and rated, and following the advice on this site should stop anyone from falling flat on their face. The site recommended Internet Bookshop (www.bookstore.co.uk) and CD Paradise (www.cdparadise.com) – both owned by WHSmith – as being among the best in the UK. But whatever associate scheme you choose, you aren't likely to become a millionaire overnight. Unless you have hundreds of thousands of visitors dropping by to check out your adverts each month, you'll just have to settle for recouping your monthly Web hosting bill.

Those free of moral 'baggage' often find the real greenback is in adult-based programs, which usually offer a bigger commission for

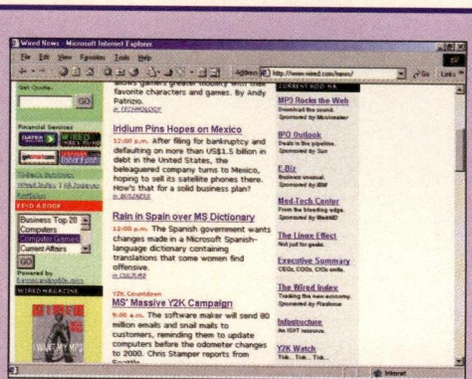
Five of the best Amazon affiliate schemes



Amazon.co.uk is one of the most popular programmes for UK Web masters. Affiliates of this scheme can customise how their money-making links manifest themselves on pages, so long as Amazon are credited with the program, so let's see what goes towards inducing those impulse buys...



Just plonking a visitor at your associate's front door is a sure-fire way to minimise your pay cheque, and The Tudor Times (www.tudortimes.com) provides us with an inadvertent example. We reckon the site would sell more books if it bothered to suggest any, rather than linking to the front page



Affiliate schemes aren't just for little fish, as Wired News (www.wired.com/news) demonstrates here. The site has affiliated itself with Amazon's rival chain, Barnes and Noble (www.bn.com), and you can see the dinky listbox Wired has gone for, cleverly making the advert interactive.

Just what you alway wanted

The only difficulty in playing shopkeeper is deciding what to sell. If you're stuck for ideas, here are 10 affiliate schemes you'll probably want to consider.

Gator
www.gator.com
Offers to pay affiliates $1 for every person who downloads their 'auto-complete' style plug-in. Simply involves adding a small graphic to your site.

Beyond.com
www.beyond.com
One of the most successful associate programs on the Web. It stocks over 30,000 software titles, and many demos.

Feature Windows
www.simplesite.freewire.co.uk/feature/index.htm
If books and CDs are too small for you, why not try flogging conservatories instead? You can earn 3.5 per cent on orders over £7,000 with this luxury conservatory company.

International Millennium Guardian Solution
www.y2kguardian.com
This is the original year 2000 'bug fix', and for each of your visitors who buys it, you'll receive 10 per cent of the $8.98 price. You also make commission on other people who join the affiliate scheme via your site.

Multisource
www.multisource.com
Lots of techie-type software on offer here. What makes this scheme different is the fact that any purchase your visitors make within 60 days of clicking your affiliate banner results in commission.

Netsight
www.simplesite.netsight.co.uk/nap.html
Make money flogging virtual server space. Seems to offer generous commission on all Web space sold through affiliate links.

CC Names
www.ccnames.cc
These registrars of .cc domains pay 10 per cent on all names registered as a result of your link. Names cost $100 for two years, and you can add a 'name search' facility to your site.

Astro-Space
www.astro-space.com
Make commission on Web hosting sold thanks to your site – $50 for every account sold sound all right? Thought so.

JetNet
www.jetnet.com
Become an affiliate of this online flight centre and enjoy a stonking 50 per cent commission on all travel booked. Now that's really handy

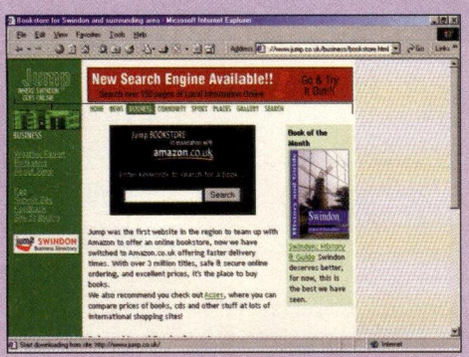
Foreign Currency
www.foreign-currency.com
Any of the visitors to your site who end up buying their holiday money from Foreign-Currency.com will net you an easy $1.50 commission.

every visitor signing up to porn sites, but since smut isn't suited to every surfer there's a cleaner money-spinner in the shape of NetEzines (www.netezines.com). NetEzines promises to pay 10 cents (about 6p) for every person who signs up to a free email newsletter delivering jokes and horoscopes, and this scheme works well because the visitor doesn't need to buy anything to earn you commission. Working in the same vein is search engine GoTo (www.goto.com), which pays two cents for each person using the GoTo search engine from your site.

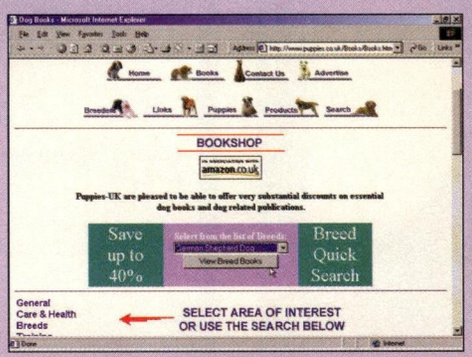
Avoiding scam schemes

Playing the affiliate game isn't without its hitches, however, and we'd be lying if we said getting paid wasn't a whole other story. Most associate programs won't dish any dough until your 'balance' – the amount you're owed – reaches a certain level, usually in the region of $100. While some British Web masters get worried about dealing with an associate program based in the US, in reality there's nothing difficult about banking a cheque made out in dollars. Banking a cheque that never even arrives, on the other hand, is more problematic. The Net and money make a volatile cocktail, and for every well-presented scheme like CDNow's Cosmic Credit (www.cdnow.com) there's a second-rate scheme like Affordable Disney (www.affordabledisney.com), which gets you to sell bargain holiday 'secrets' but is curiously quiet on how much money it'll pay.

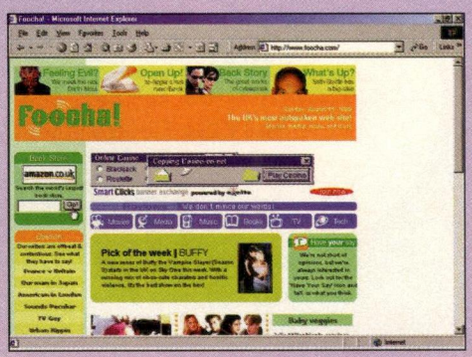
To avoid affiliate-scheme scams steer clear of poorly built sites – it's often true that if a Web page looks dodgy, the people behind it are crooked too. Asking current members for feedback could save you a lot of bother. Run from anything that sniffs of multi-level marketing too. Some two-tier systems can work, but don't be suckered by any exaggerated claims. Start from a reputable affiliate directory such as Commission Junction (www.cj.com), then click your way around. And if the money isn't rolling in by the end of the month, insisting relatives buy birthday presents from your Web site may well be the only thing for it. ■



Swindon Online (www.jump.co.uk) has a section reviewing books about the town, including a 'book of the month'. Notice how the items are temptingly pictured, and how both the title of the book and the image are linked directly to the product over on Amazon.co.uk. Doing this adds a value to the site and earning potential.



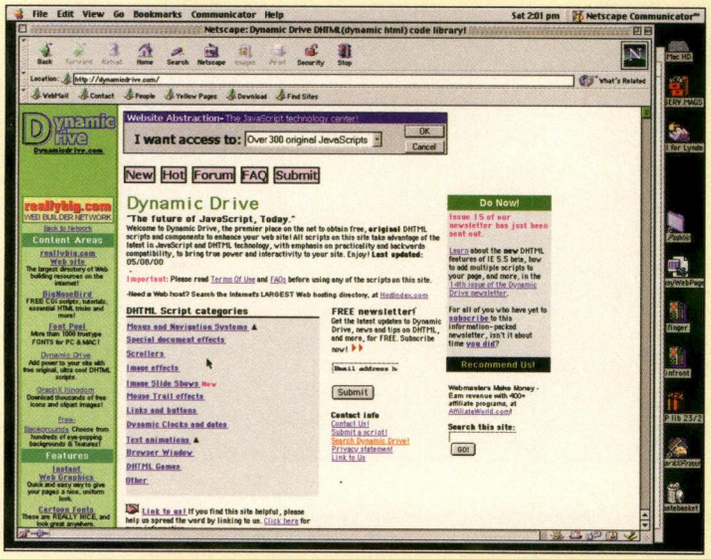
Puppies UK (www.puppies.co.uk) has created its own drop-down menu with dozens of breeds of dogs. Each is linked to a particular book about the breed – a 15-minute job we're sure will pay off for the Web master. This 'book section' is on a page separate from the main content. It might be better if it were more integrated.



Fledgling Web portal Foocha! (www.foocha.com) invites you to 'search the world's largest bookstore' with its trim affiliate search engine. Some visitors find the dinky little boxes tempting to click into, and they're a perfect interface for situations like this, when space is at a premium.

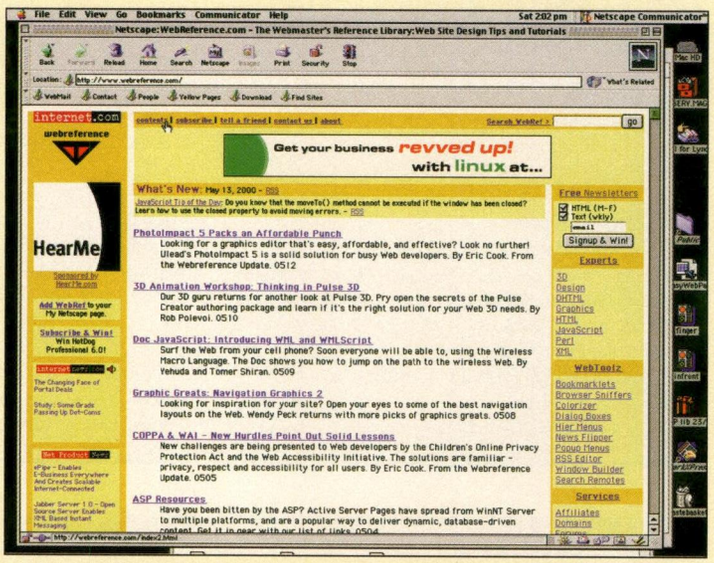
Resources

Now that you're an expert, we've found a selection of handy resources for you



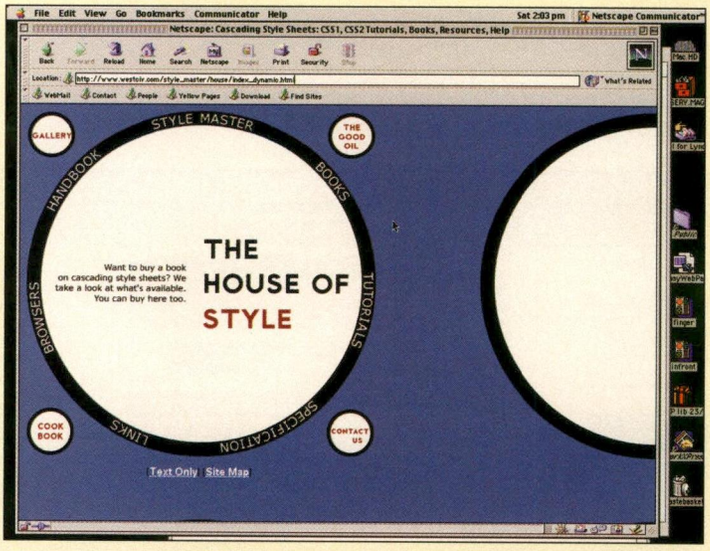
DYNAMIC DRIVE http://dynamicdrive.com

So many Web sites offer help with JavaScript and DHTML, but Dynamic Drive is definitely one to add to your Favorites/Bookmarks. Although the Web site may look spartan, it has some fantastic scripts, some of which we haven't seen elsewhere. The walkthrough tutorials are especially useful, as they insert code into your pages and use wizards to generate your own unique code for some scripts.



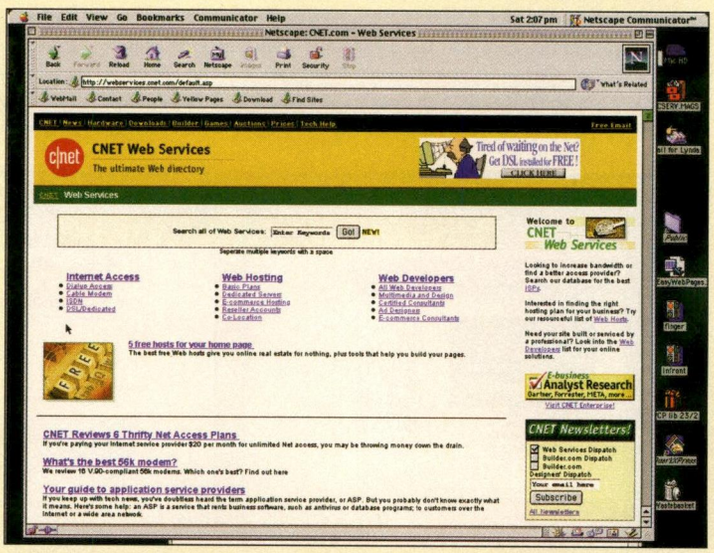
WEBREFERENCE.COM www.webreference.com

A huge, comprehensive reference library for Web designers. If you're at a level where you understand DOM to mean 'Document Object Model', then this is a site to bookmark. With no punches pulled, WebReference regularly jumps feet first into tutorials on CSS, DOM, XML, and more. Memorable quote? "It seems PerlHoo has another challenger. CDI has developed a PHP version of PerlHoo that not only stores its data in MySQL but is also searchable!" Praise be.



THE HOUSE OF STYLE www.westciv.com/style_master/house

Version 4 browsers were supposed to make using fonts easier with Cascading Style Sheets. They enable Web page developers to define the fonts used by each part of a page and apply them across a Web site. The House of Style has sample Style Sheets for you to pick up and use in the Cookbook, full descriptions and tutorials on using CSS and, best of all, a compatibility section to show you which browsers support which CSS features.



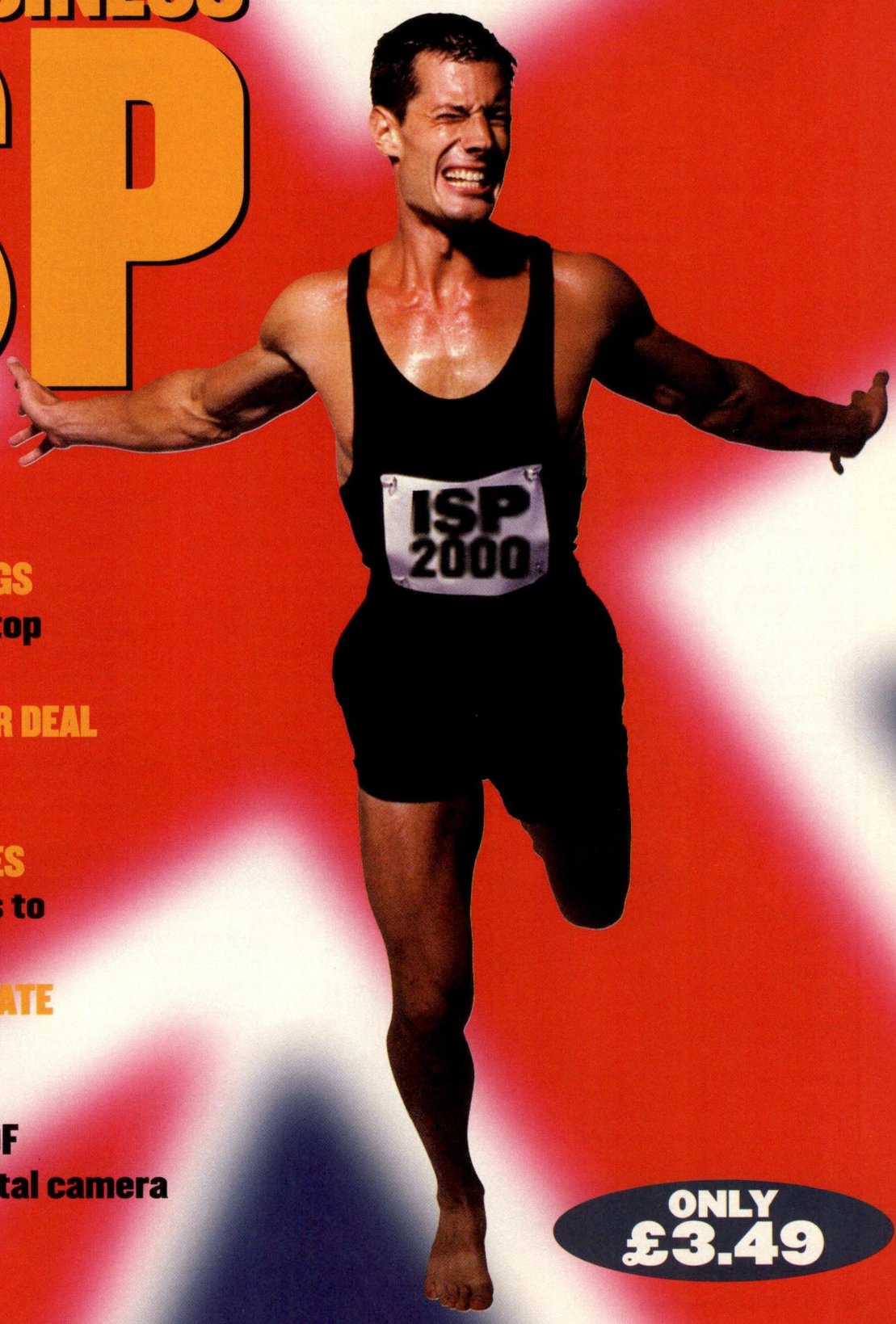
CNET WEB SERVICES http://webservices.cnet.com/default.asp

This Web site provides an overview of Internet Service Providers and Web hosts. It provides an unbiased look at the services available, how to get the best deal and guides you through the maze of companies offering space and services. With reviews of the services on offer, US-based CNET Web resources could help you to take advantage of the best deals available. ■

www.iwks.com

Internet.Works

BEST BUSINESS ISP



This month

RACE UP THE RANKINGS
We show you how to top the search engines

GET THE BEST BANNER DEAL
What you should pay for Web adverts

MAXIMISE YOUR SALES
Use callback services to increase your orders

ANIMATE, DON'T IMITATE
10 new Flash ideas

PLUS FULL REVIEWS OF

- Sony DSC-F505 digital camera
- Shopzone pro 3
- Videowave III

ONLY £3.49

Software reviews

Now that you know how to put your Web site together, you need some software. Practical Web Pages has checked out the main players for you

Dreamweaver 3.0

MACROMEDIA HAS UPDATED OUR FAVOURITE WEB DESIGN PROGRAM. SHOULD YOU REACH FOR YOUR CREDIT CARD?

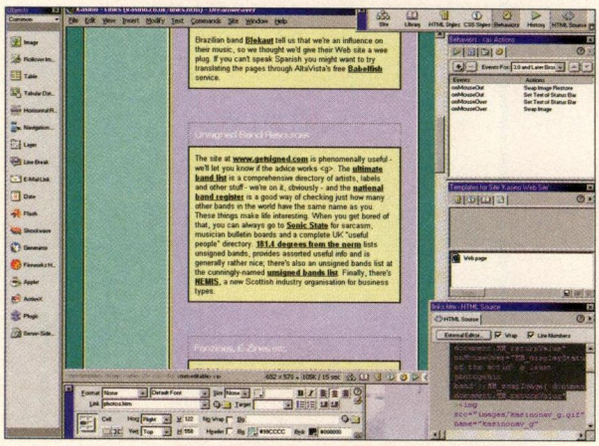
We spend a lot of time using Dreamweaver and while we think it's a great program for designing complex sites, it frequently drives us nuts. The HTML source editing isn't fantastic, the Undo feature is almost worthless, and we spend more time moving toolbars out of the way than on building our Web pages.

In Version 3, the Undo feature has been replaced with a History tab that lets you review everything you've done, and you can store particularly nifty actions for future reference. The HTML window has been improved, too, and you can now view line numbers and move code around by dragging and dropping (you also get a bundled copy of the HomeSite HTML editor, or BBEdit if you're using a Mac). There's also a Quick Tag Editor, which enables you to edit HTML tags without leaving the main Dreamweaver window. The interface hasn't changed much, though. Unless you're running at a screen resolution of 1024x768 or higher, you'll find yourself desperately short of space for your actual Web pages.

Rather than redesigning the program from scratch, Macromedia has concentrated on making a number of improvements to existing features. The Clean Up HTML option can be configured to ignore tags from ASP pages or ColdFusion, and there's a new feature for turning Word 2000's awful HTML output into something more sensible. The site management tools now include options for synchronising files between your local copy and the Web server, and you can set it to delete any redundant files from the server.

If your site includes Flash movies, you can update their links from within Dreamweaver – a small improvement, but a very useful one. The existing Style Sheets palette has been supplemented by HTML styles, which use standard HTML tags to define the appearance of page elements for browsers that don't fully support CSS. Another useful addition is the Table Import function, which you can use to automatically create HTML tables from data files.

One of the best new features is the redesigned Object Palette. As before, you can use the icons to quickly insert images, horizontal rules or tables, but clicking the top of the palette now gives you single-click access to special characters (copyright symbols or user-defined characters), standard framesets, head content and form elements. If you're working in a Web design team, you can use the Design Notes feature to store your comments and those of your colleagues.



Dreamweaver is a great program, but its unusual interface needs a screen resolution of at least 1024x768.

All of the program's menus are stored in an XML file called menus.xml, and if you know what you're doing you can reorganise the program's interface, remove bits you don't want and add new menu items and keyboard shortcuts. You can also use JavaScript to create your own floating toolbars and palettes.

If you only design the odd page or have a fairly small site, Dreamweaver is far too expensive and scary for your needs, try HotMetal (pages 64–69) If you're in charge of huge amounts of Web pages, would like to build your own program interface or need to create very complex sites, however, Dreamweaver's still the best program you can buy. ■

The Verdict

Dreamweaver 3.0

Developed by: Macromedia
☎ 01344 458 600
On the Web: www.macromedia.com/uk
On the disc: Trial version of the current issue
PRICE: £180 (upgrades from £80) or £250 for Dreamweaver or Fireworks Studio 3
System: Pentium 120, 32Mb RAM, 20Mb hard-disk space, Windows 95/98/NT; Power Mac, 32Mb RAM, 20Mb disc space, Mac OS 8.1 or higher

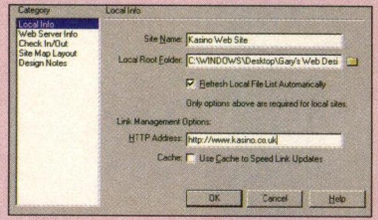
Uppers
Brain-bogglingly powerful
• Completely customisable
• Great for huge sites

Downers
Unusual interface won't suit everybody – needs at least 1024x768 resolution

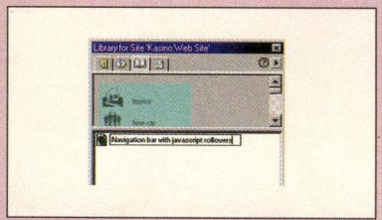
Overall
One day, all software will be made this way

Rating
★★★★★

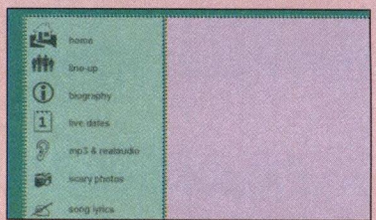
Reuse page elements



1 *Before you can use the Library, you need to define a Web site from the program's Site menu. This tells Dreamweaver where to store your pages. If you specify a folder that contains a site already, Dreamweaver will import it.*



2 *Complex navigation bars can be time-consuming to reproduce. If you highlight your navigation bar and drag the contents over Dreamweaver's library window, it will store the graphics, links and JavaScript.*



3 *Using something from the library is just a matter of dragging the appropriate item over your Web page. If you later decide to change an item, select Modify, then Library to apply changes to your entire site.*

Fireworks 3.0

MACROMEDIA HAS BEEN TWEAKING ITS EXCELLENT WEB GRAPHICS PROGRAM. WE CHECK OUT THE CHANGES

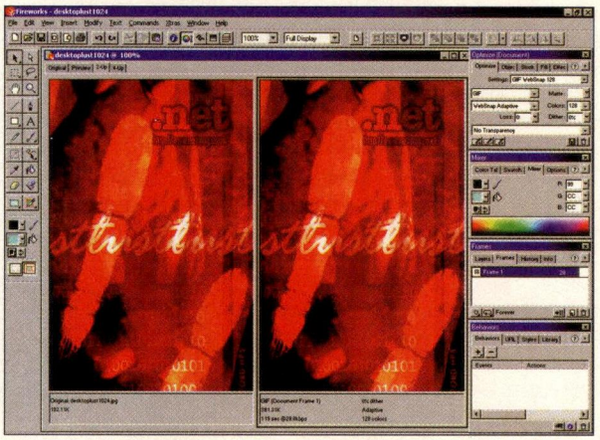
Fireworks is a great graphics program, and sensibly Macromedia hasn't mucked about with it too much. There are plenty of new features in Version 3, but the interface will be instantly familiar to users of previous versions.

The first thing you'll notice is that the document window is now tabbed. You have the normal editing view as before, together with three new options: preview, 2-up and 4-up. These tabs give you a preview of how your optimised graphic will look, and the 2-up and 4-up views enable you to try different file formats and optimisation settings from the main program window. This is accomplished through the Tool Options toolbar, which now has an optimisation tab to supplement the familiar object, stroke, fill and effect controls. This tab gives you quick access to Fireworks' default options for exporting graphics files, and you can edit colour palettes and compression settings with a few clicks. If you find a setting you like, you can save it for future use. In addition to standard Web file formats, you can also export files to Freehand, Illustrator and Flash.

The effects have been improved too. You still get the usual drop shadows and outline options, but you'll now find brightness, contrast and hue controls that you can apply to individual objects.

Fireworks' text handling dialog is another welcome improvement. The font list now gives you a preview of how your text will look, and there are four different anti-alias settings for your text. You can also quickly change fonts and sizes from the text menu if you're in a hurry. We did find a few problems with the text handling, however – when working on rotated text, Fireworks kept resizing our text frame for no apparent reason. We're assuming this is a bug rather than a design feature.

Integration with Dreamweaver has been improved, and you'll notice a number of similarities between the programs. Fireworks now has a history window that keeps track of your actions, and as with Dreamweaver you can store instructions for future use. There's also a library where you can store graphics or objects that you use frequently, and you can insert your images into Dreamweaver by using the Insert Fireworks command. This inserts complete graphics from your Fireworks file, together with any associated HTML code for tables, rollovers or mouseover events.



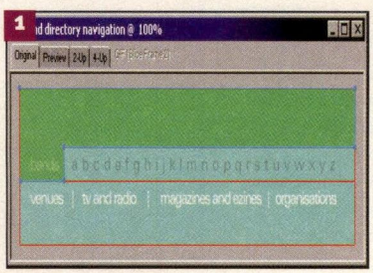
The revised Fireworks doesn't look dramatically different, but the familiar interface includes some powerful new tools

Fireworks' image slicing has been improved too. You can now create strangely shaped slices, and overlapping slices won't cause HTML errors. We were particularly impressed by the Button Editor, which simplifies the process of creating multi-state buttons and automatically adds them to the Library, and there are some new behaviors, including a Set Nav Bar Image feature for rollover images.

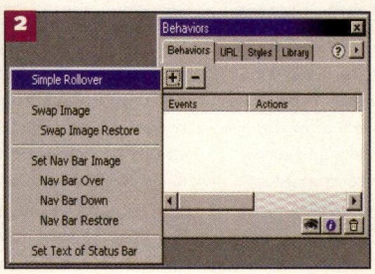
You'll find that your PC runs fairly slowly when you build images containing lots of elements and slices, and Macromedia has added a draft view that shows everything in wireframe bar the currently selected object. It's a great idea and it's typical of the way Fireworks has grown up – rather than adding pointless gimmicks, Macromedia has concentrated instead on improving the things you're likely to use every day. ■

Create a menu with rollovers

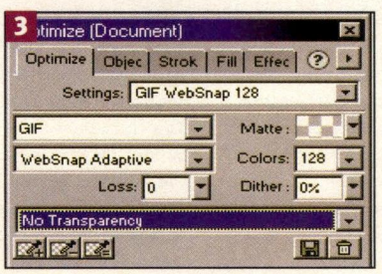
1 ***Create an image with two frames – the first should be the normal image, and the second will be the menu once someone moves a mouse over it. Use the slice tool to divide the image into individual links.***



2 ***Once you've divided your image into slices, select each slice and click on the Behavior palette's plus sign. Choose Simple Rollover, then click on URL and enter the name of the page or Web site you want that slice to link to.***



3 ***The Optimise palette enables you to try different file formats and colour depths, so you can quickly see how your finished image will look. You can test the rollovers by moving your mouse over the image in Preview mode.***



The Verdict

Fireworks 3.0

Macromedia

☎ 01344 458 600

On the Web: *www.macromedia.com/uk*

On the disc: *Trial version*

PRICE: *£125 (upgrades from £60) or £250 for Dreamweaver or Fireworks Studio 3*

System: *Pentium II, 64Mb RAM, 100Mb disc space, Windows 95/98/NT; Power Mac G3, 64Mb RAM, 100Mb disc space, Mac OS 8.1 or higher*

Uppers

- *Familiar interface*
- *Good export options*
- *Genuinely useful new features*

Downers

A few problems with text handling

Overall

A serious graphics program for serious designers

Rating

★★★★½

NetStudio 2000

THE FIRST "WEB PICTURE PROCESSOR" TAKES THE RULEBOOK AND THROWS IT OUT THE WINDOW. IS THIS THE BEGINNING OF A NEW BREED?

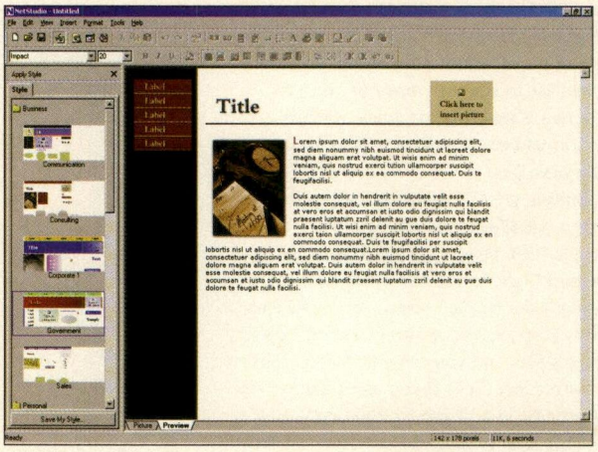
There are dozens of Web graphics programs, and while no two programs are the same, they generally work in the same way. NetStudio 2000 is different, however. Billing itself as the first "Web picture processor", it throws the rulebook out the window.

The philosophy behind NetStudio is to create a graphics package that works like a word processor, so it looks and works very differently to any Web graphics program you've seen before. The interface is closer to Microsoft Office than Adobe Photoshop, and the usual toolbars are replaced with a Standard toolbar and a Formatting toolbar. There are no drawing tools as such – if you want to create your own images, NetStudio isn't for you.

In addition to creating images from scratch, you can open existing Web pages and change each graphic without leaving NetStudio. It's a strange way of working, and although it makes editing graphics very easy, it's so different from anything else we've seen that it took us ages to work out what was going on.

Most of its features are performed with a single click. You can make images semi-transparent or fade them out, add special effects such as embossing and drop shadows, and even adjust brightness and contrast by clicking on the formatting toolbar. NetStudio also includes a number of templates that you can edit, and there are excellent wizards for creating advertising banners, buttons, bullet points and rollover images.

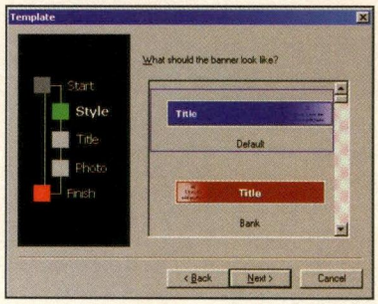
We liked the features for adjusting your images, and we were particularly impressed by the autoshapes – if you want to take a photograph and turn it into a star shape, circle or arrow, you can do so with a single click. The program also decides automatically whether it should use the GIF or JPEG format when saving, although there's no option for adjusting JPEG compression or GIF palettes. The Web page preview is problematic too. Clicking on a graphic will open it in Picture View but if it's hyperlinked, your browser window will also open.



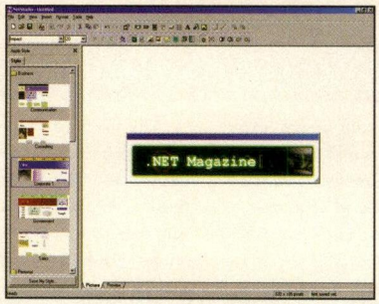
NetStudio makes it easy to spice up your Web pages, but its unusual interface takes a lot of getting used to

NetStudio is certainly innovative, but it may annoy people who want complete control over graphics – for power users, Fireworks or Photoshop are much better, and NetStudio is useless for image creation. If you're not interested in power and just want to add graphics to your pages, however, NetStudio makes your life a lot easier. Non-professional Web designers might find it's exactly what they're looking for. Professionals will hate it, but it makes editing Web graphics as easy as using clip art in a word processor. ■

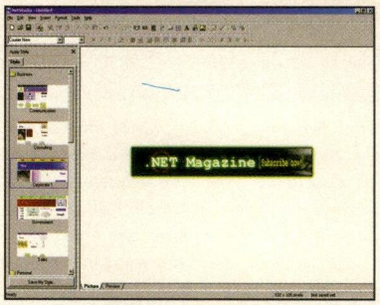
Create a banner



When NetStudio loads, it gives you a number of options. In the Create With A Wizard section, choose Banner and click on Next. You'll be offered several banner designs – scroll down and select the Conspiracy design. You'll then be asked for your banner text and the location of any background image.



Click on Finish and NetStudio will open the banner in Picture view. A box appears around the selected image. You can select different parts of the banner by clicking on them and using the Formatting toolbar to change fonts, colours and special effects. To add new text, click on the Insert Text button.



Once you've added some text, you can then stretch it by clicking on it and resizing the box. You can also change the font face and size, colour or special effects by using the toolbar buttons. Click on Save and NetStudio selects the best format for your graphics file – in this case, it saves your banner as a JPEG.

The Verdict

Net Studio 2000

NetStudio Corporation

☎ 00 1 650 846 6540

On the Web: *www.netstudio.com*

PRICE: *$89.00 (about £55)*

System: *Pentium 200, 16Mb RAM (32Mb), 30Mb disk space, Windows 95/98/NT*

Uppers

- *One-click special effects*
- *Clever autoshapes*
- *Very fast*

Downers

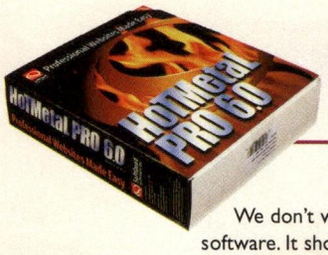
- *Strange way of working*
- *No drawing tools*
- *No advanced features*

Overall

An interesting program for beginners, but graphics professionals will find little of value

Rating

★★★☆☆



HoTMetaL PRO 6.0

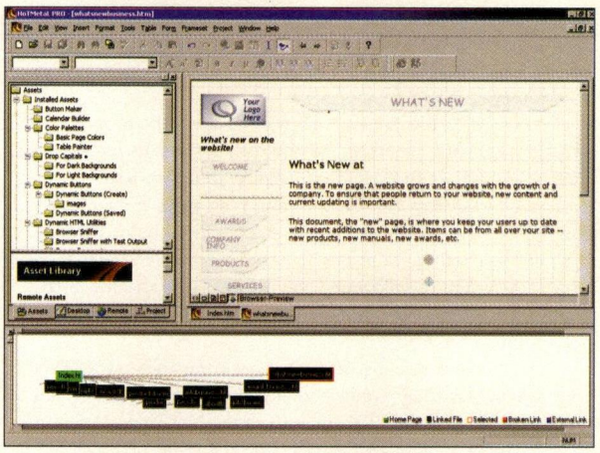
SoftQuad's excellent HTML program does absolutely everything, and costs much less than the competition

We don't want much from our Web authoring software. It should have the ability to work in both HTML and WYSIWYG modes, and should support cascading style sheets, DHTML and JavaScript. We want to preview our pages in eight different browsers, and we'd like some built-in site management tools. We don't want the program to muck about with our source code, but we'd like it to check our HTML for mistakes and broken links. Oh, can we have a graphics package, GIF animator, FTP program and an HTML and JavaScript tutorial too?

Incredibly, HotMetaL Pro 6 includes everything detailed above. It can work with your plain HTML code, in a word processing-style WYSIWYG mode, or using its own 'tags on' mode, which combines the two display types. There's a huge library of page elements from form fields to buttons and style sheets, and HTML validation and site management tools are built in. You also get full versions of the excellent WS_FTP Pro FTP Client and Ulead's PhotoImpact SE and GIF Animator, although the latter is a fairly old version. Both Internet Explorer and Netscape are also included, and there are course notes covering the essentials of HTML and JavaScript.

HotMetaL is very well-designed, although the range of options is likely to terrify anybody who hasn't used a Web authoring package before. The interface manages to combine the best bits of FrontPage and DreamWeaver without copying their faults. Good use is made of tabbed windows to keep track of your pages and, if you want to work on your code without distractions, there's a useful full-screen view that gets rid of toolbars and other clutter.

One of its best features is the Asset Library, an Explorer-style tree that contains every conceivable part of a site. Common form elements and JavaScript functions are stored here, together with basic buttons and rollovers. You can add your own text, code or other items to it by dragging them from your pages, or dragging items from the Asset Manager on to your page. It's extremely easy to use and the form functions are particularly well put together.



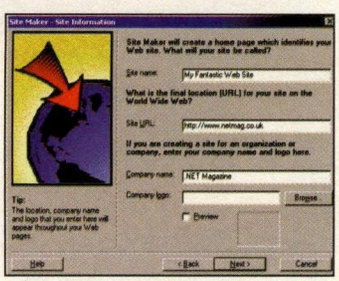
HotMetaL's workspace is completely customisable, although new users may find it a little intimidating

The Library window also doubles as a mini-browser, so you can find items on your hard disk and drag them on to your Web pages. You can also add FTP sites and even drag items from sites in your browser window, or upload your finished pages to your server.

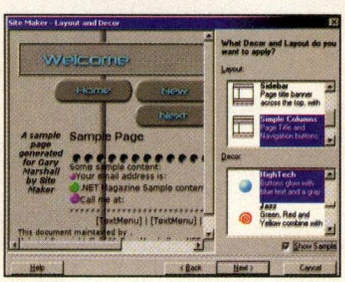
HotMetaL can also handle very advanced features, with full support for languages including JavaScript, VBScript, and Perl, together with a database import function that handles Access and Excel data, RTF, ASCII, Word and WordPerfect. There's a built-in macro recorder and the program's COM interface means you can add new functions using Java or C++.

SoftQuad describes HotMetaL as "the only tool you'll ever need to create great sites". Not only is it a very powerful program, but at £99 it's considerably cheaper than the competition. ■

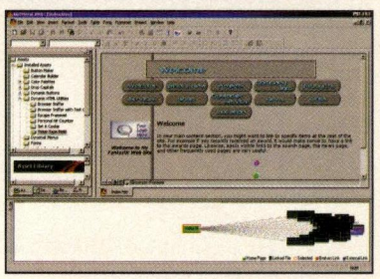
Construct a Web site in seconds


Site Maker - Site Information
Site Maker will create a home page which identifies your Web site. What will your site be called?
Site name:
My Fantastic Web Site
What is the final location (URL) for your site on the World Wide Web?
Site URL:
http://www.netmag.co.uk
If you are creating a site for an organization or company, enter your company name and logo here.
Company name:
NET Magazine
Company logo:
Browse...
Preview
Tip:
The location, company name and logo that you enter here will appear throughout your Web pages.
Help
< Back
Next >
Cancel

1 ***HotMetaL includes Site Maker, a utility that makes it easy to put a Web site together. Enter your information in the dialog box and HotMetal will then ask whether you want to create a business site, a personal site or an Intranet.***



2 ***You can specify which pages HotMetaL should include in your Web site, and choose from a range of layouts, designs and colour schemes. In the example shown above, we've gone for the High Tech design, which looks suitably futuristic.***



3 ***When you have finished choosing designs, HotMetaL builds your Web site and opens it up for editing. You can now replace the sample text with your own words, change images and see how the pages will eventually look in your Web browser.***

The Verdict

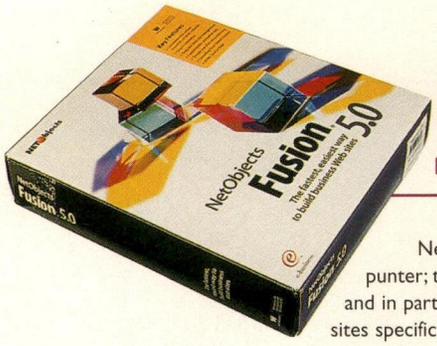
HoTMetaL Pro 6.0
SoftQuad
☎ *020 8387 4110*
On the Web:
www.softquad.co.uk
On the disc:
Readers' Requests
PRICE: *£99*
System: *Pentium, 32Mb RAM, 50Mb disk space, Windows 95/98/NT*

Uppers
- *Completely customisable*
- *Does absolutely everything*
- *It's cheap!*

Downers
May be a little intimidating for new users

Overall
An exceptional program that's also much cheaper than the competition

Rating
★★★★★



NetObject Fusion 5.0

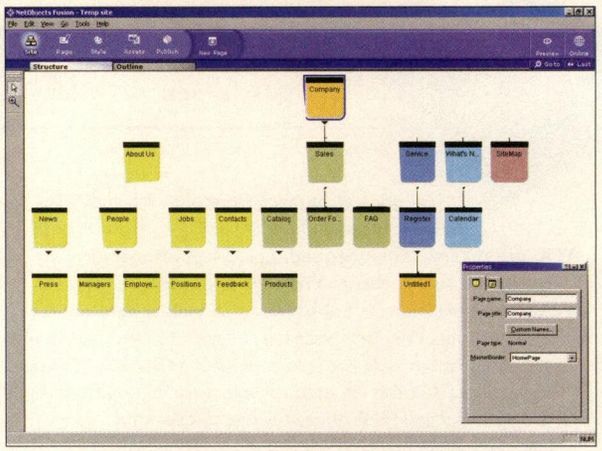
NETOBJECTS' SIMPLE AND STYLISH SITE CREATOR CAN PUT YOUR COMPANY ONLINE BY LUNCHTIME

NetObjects Fusion isn't designed for the average punter; this software is aimed squarely at business users, and in particular non-designers who need to create Web sites specifically for small businesses. Unlike most Web design programs, which are basically page editors with some site management tools tacked on, Fusion is a Web site editor that also includes page-design features. This is an important difference and, if you're the sort of Web site designer that spends hours labouring on the appearance of a single Web page, then Fusion isn't the software for you. That doesn't mean that Fusion isn't a powerful tool, though – it is.

When you create a new Web site in Fusion, the program presents you with the Structure view (see screenshot on the right). This is a flowchart showing every page in your Web site in a structured form. You can add or delete Web pages from your Web site by right-clicking on the mouse, and a floating dialog box provides you with quick access to page titles and filenames. It's a very easy system to follow, and you can also view the site in an Explorer-style tree view by clicking on the Outline tab at the top of the screen.

One of the best things about Fusion is the Style tab, which gives you access to 50 predefined designs for your Web site. You can download a further 200 styles from the NetObjects Web site (www.netobjects.com), and you can edit the styles provided or design your own. A single click of the mouse applies the style to your entire Web site.

The Page Editor contains the usual buttons for adding text frames, form elements, Java applets and other common objects. The floating Properties dialog box gives you quick access to formatting and alignment, and there's a good range of predefined behaviours such as MouseOver, OnClick and Dynamic HTML effects. You can also define your own behaviours and add them to the list. Fusion fully supports HTML 3.0, as well as the browser-specific tags for recent versions of Netscape and Internet Explorer. Cascading Style Sheets are fully supported, and you can add e-commerce elements including Cold Fusion tags or shop@ssistant code. If you use Dynamic HTML for your Web site, Fusion cleverly creates two versions – one for modern, hi-tech Web browsers and a static HTML version for older software.



Fusion makes it easy to view the structure of your Web site, and you can add or remove pages without the need for time-consuming HTML editing

If you would rather work with raw HTML, one mouse click takes you directly to the source editor. This is split into two sections, with a tree showing the structure of your code in the left hand side of the screen and the code itself in the right-hand side. It's easy to use and doesn't muck about with your lovingly crafted HTML or JavaScript.

Once you've created your Web site, Fusion makes it easy to apply changes. The Assets window lists every link, filename and variable in your site – change anything here and the program automatically updates every page in your site. Clicking on the Publish button will then upload your pages to your Web server or corporate Intranet.

Fusion isn't the quickest page editor we've tested – the preview takes ages – but the site creation tools are blindingly fast. If you want to create design-heavy sites, we'd recommend Dreamweaver, while FrontPage is a better bet for Microsoft Office users on an Intranet. If your boss wants you to build a corporate Web presence by lunchtime, however, Fusion is the best tool for the job. ■

The Verdict

NetObject Fusion 5.0

NetObjects, Inc
☎ 0800 181 9180
On the Web: *www.netobjects.com*
PRICE: *$299 (around £180)*
System: *Pentium 133, 32Mb RAM, 110Mb disk space, Windows 95/98/NT*

Uppers

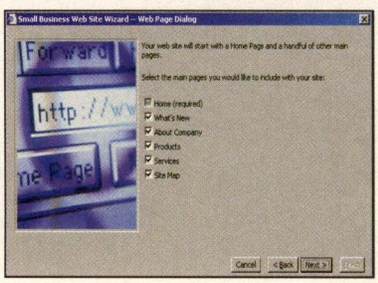
- *Creates huge Web sites very quickly*
- *Good predefined styles*
- *Excellent CSS support*

Downers

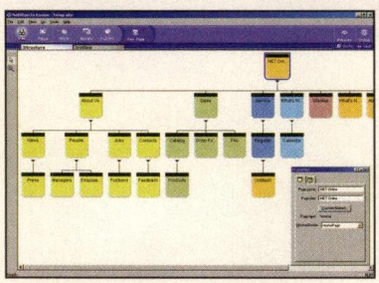
- *Runs fairly slowly*
- *A site editor rather than a page editor*

Overall
A very capable program for people who need to build sites quickly
Rating
★★★★☆

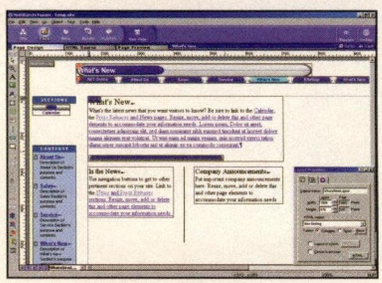
Build a business site


Small Business Web Site Wizard – Web Page Dialog
Your web site will start with a Home Page and a handful of other main pages.
Select the main pages you would like to include with your site:
Home (required)
What's New
About Company
Products
Services
Site Map
Cancel
< Back
Next >

1 From the Tools menu, select Wizard, then Small Business Web site. A series of dialog boxes will ask what pages you want your site to include, and you'll be asked to provide basic information such as your company's name, details of its ISP, server password and URL.



2 Fusion will then create your site and display the Structure view. You can add new pages or remove existing ones by right-clicking the mouse, while the Properties dialog makes it easy to change page names and titles. Next, click on the Style button and choose a design for your pages.



3 Switching to Page View opens the page you have selected for editing. The design you chose has been applied to your page, and Fusion adds sample text that you can highlight and change. The toolbar at the left enables you to add additional items including Java applets and multimedia clips.

4 FULL PROGRAMS ON THE CD – INC HOTMETAL PRO 4.0, PLUS MUCH MORE

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www.pcanswers.co.uk

Suite Dreams

***Essential* Power Tips for all your Office applications**

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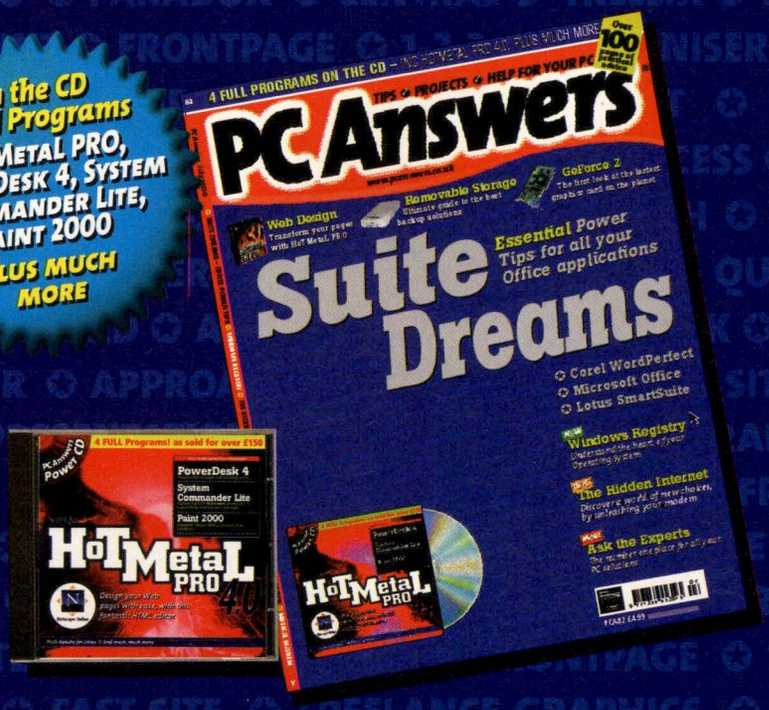
- Microsoft Office
- Lotus SmartSuite

On the CD
4 Full Programs
HoTMetaL PRO, PowerDesk 4, System Commander Lite, Paint 2000
PLUS MUCH MORE



NEW
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MORE
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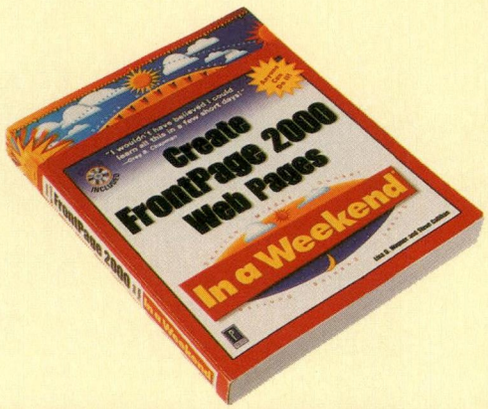
Book reviews

If you still haven't had enough of Web pages after reading this magazine, you might like to try reading a book on the topic. We've looked at some for you

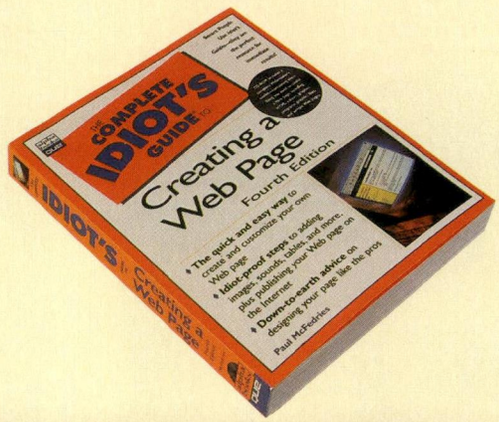


Create FrontPage 200 Web Pages in a Weekend

Got anything planned this weekend? No? Well, why not make good use of your time and build your own Web site, then. According to the authors of this book, it will only take you from Friday to Sunday evening to have your site up and running with FrontPage Express.

FrontPage Express is Microsoft's simple Web page creator which comes free with Internet Explorer and is similar to Microsoft's Word programme. Although this book has been written for beginners it assumes some previous knowledge and experience of Windows. The book takes you through all stages of the Web building process giving ideas for Web site design, an overview of HTML topics tips on finding a Web site provider and posting a site, lessons for converting graphics to Web-compatible formats and guidelines for site maintenance and promotion.

Title: *Create FrontPage 200 Web Pages in a Weekend*
Author: *Lisa D. Wagner and Steve Callihan*
ISBN: *0-7615-1929-7*
Price: *£23.49*
Publisher: *Prima Tech (www.prima-tech.com)*
Rating: ★★★☆☆

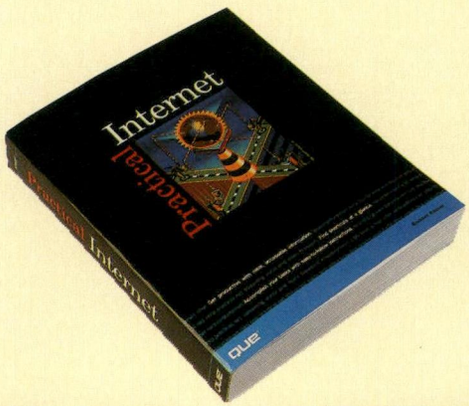


The Complete Idiot's Guide to Creating a Web page

"The good news is that HTML doesn't stand for Hard To Master Lingo." So claims the author of this book and he goes to great lengths to prove it too with hundreds of tutorials, a glossary of Web terms and an FAQ section.

From creating your first Web page to publishing your site on the Web, Paul McFedries guides you through the stages of HTML Web building in friendly, humorous language. Some may find his humour a little cheesy but at least he is trying and if he manages to make HTML even remotely entertaining then he deserves some credit. The CD is packed with goodies including HTML editors, graphics programs, graphics files and sample Web pages and, of course, there's a chapter devoted to using the CD too. There are brief sections on HTML Editors, Graphics software, FTP Programs, Web browsers, software and more. It's cracking stuff.

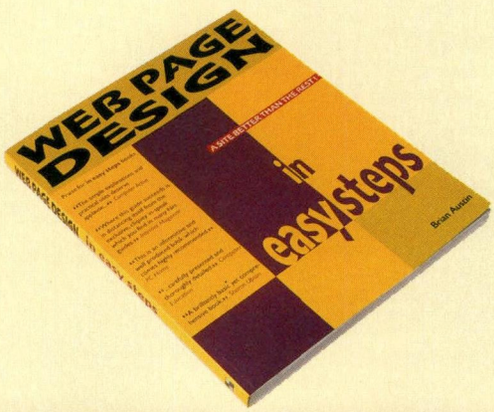
Title: *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Creating a Web page, Fourth Edition*
Author: *Paul McFedries*
ISBN: *0-7897-2256-9*
Price: *£18.50*
Publisher: *Que (www.mcp.com)*
Rating: ★★★★☆



PRACTICAL INTERNET

Are you tired of feeling left out because everyone is chatting endlessly about this and that Web site and talking in Internet jargon which you don't understand? Then this is the tome for you. At a mammoth 592 pages, this book gives thorough coverage of the important uses of the Internet. Although it assumes some experience of using Windows, Practical Internet *is written in straightforward plain English and clarifies the major aspects of the Net starting with basic topics such as "What is the Internet?. From this point, the author takes you through the browsing process and email step-by-step before moving on to discuss newsgroups, chat rooms and more advanced functions such as finding a job, managing your money online, and building your own Web site with FrontPage Express and Netscape Composer. Now, that's what I call handy.*

Title: *Practical Internet*
Author: *Barbara Kassar*
ISBN: *0-7897-2226-7*
Price: *£17.99*
Publisher: *Que (www.mcp.com)*
Rating: ★★★½☆



Web Page Design in Easy Steps

After a brief introduction to the Web, Web Page Design in Easy Steps *gets straight to the nitty-gritty of Web site design. It takes the reader through the important decisions that must be made when designing a Web site and covers essential considerations for every Web site from the early planning stages to the final marketing and promotion. Topics range from setting up a design strategy for your pages to creating a rollover button, adding video files and getting a high listing for your site with a search engine. The book assumes that you have set up a basic Web page with a software program and then takes you though tasks like adding email links and forms in HTML or JavaScript code. There are handy tips on every page. The text is written is in clearly and simply without being patronising. A winning little number.* ■

Title: *Web Page Design in Easy Steps*
Author: *Brian Austin*
ISBN: *1-84078-039-8*
Price: *£8.99*
Publisher: *Computer Step (www.computerstep.com)*
Rating: ★★★★★

Questions and Answers

Yes, it's our first issue. We asked our friends at .net *and* Internet Advisor *to help us find some q & as. Here are the results. Hopefully they'll answer some of the questions that you'd like to ask. If not ask us yourself. Email us at pracweb@futurenet.co.uk*

What's the META?

Q I have Web pages at www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~kerrrw, and I recently received and email saying that I don't have any META tags. Could you tell me what they are – are they important, and how and where do I insert them in my pages?

Rab Kerr
rab.kerr@ic24.net

A *This is a common question. META tags are snippets of HTML that go in the header at the top of your page (between the <HEAD>... </HEAD> tags). They don't show up when you view the page in a browser and are used to pass instructions either to the browser, the Web server or to search engines. There are two types, of which the first is HTTP-EQUIV. These are used to send instructions as part of the HTTP header (used when browsers and Web servers talk to each other). The most common of these is REFRESH:*

<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="10;URL=page2.htm">

This instructs the browser to wait 10 seconds, then go off and get the next page, page2.htm. Alternatively, you can simply use CONTENT="10", which will reload the current page after 10 seconds. Another use of the HTTP-EQUIV method is to set an expiry date for the page:
<META HTTP-EQUIV="expires" CONTENT="Mon, 31 May 1999 12:00:00 GMT">

This should stop browsers from caching the page after the specified date, and some search engines will stop listing the page after this date.
The other type of META tag is the NAME/CONTENT combination. The syntax is simple:

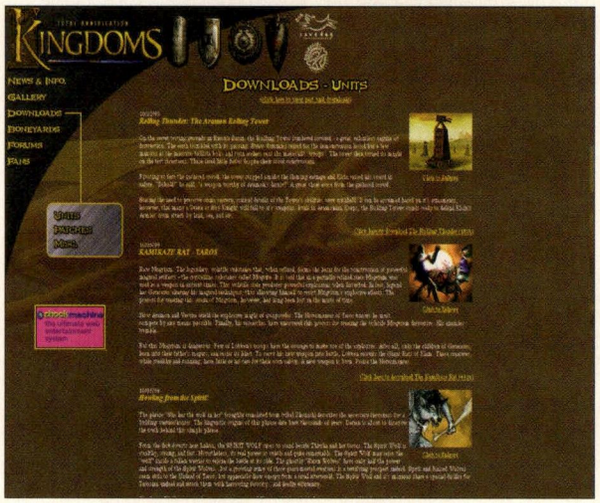
<META NAME="name" CONTENT="content">

If you have NAME="keywords", then CONTENT can contain a comma-separated list of words you want your page to be indexed under by a search engine; similarly, NAME="description" should have a short paragraph describing your site in the CONTENT field. These are the two most useful META tags, and there are whole sites that tell you how to use these to get the best out of the search engines.
There are many other NAME values, some of which are more widely recognised than others, and most of which serve no useful function. For example, many HTML editing programs use "generator" to let people know what was used to create the site; and "copyright" is useful to stake your claim over the material on your pages.

The right Web space

Q Please help me! I've read loads of articles about domain names but I'm still flummoxed! I am creating my company's Web site, for which we have registered a domain name. At present we don't have an ISP that offers free Web space (we have a temporary email address with BT Click) and I am now in the process of finding the right one for our purposes. Am I right in understanding that free ISPs that offer free Web space will require their name to be part of a Web address – for example, www.madasafish.com/companyname? Or will they allow you to have your registered domain name – for example, www.companyname.co.uk? If so, do you recommend any such sites? If not, am I right in thinking that I may have to find a Web-hosting company, such as Virtual Internet, and pay an annual fee so that only our domain name appears in the address?

Claire Thurmer
claire@bw456.free-online.co.uk



A good example of a background image that stays static as you scroll up and down the page

A *We're afraid you are pretty much right on all counts, Claire. Most ISPs will have their name in your normal URL. You can use a Web-forwarding service, whereby the company that sold you the name will forward everyone that types your address to your free Web space, but this won't look very professional. Also, be aware that some free ISPs don't let you use your Web space commercially. The best option is to go for dedicated Web hosting.*

Sit, background! Stay...

Q How do I make a background image that remains static when you scroll up and down? An example can be found at Kingdoms Gallery (www.cavedog.com/ta-kingdoms/downloads.html).

Duncan Gill
d.s.gill@btinternet.com

A *Creating a background image that remains static while the text rolls over it as you scroll down is an easy effect to achieve, although it*

Hints & tips

Thanks to Cascading Style Sheets, there is now a simple solution to the problem of trying to get text sizes to match between operating systems. Instead of defining the size of your text using points, use pixels. For example, the following will show all text within paragraph tags at 18 pixels, giving you absolute control over your page, however it is being viewed:

```
<STYLE
TYPE="text/css">
P { font-size: 18px;
}
</STYLE>
```

must be remembered that it only works in IE4-plus. It is also worth remembering that this effect can look a little strange with certain backgrounds, so use it sparingly. Simply add this within your body tag:

BGPROPERTIES="fixed"

So your <BODY> tag would look like this:

<BODY BACKGROUND="yourimage.gif" BGPROPERTIES="fixed">

Don't quote me, but...

Q What is the situation with using quote marks in building Web pages, in font colors and image names, and so on? I use IE5 and it seems to work okay if you leave them out altogether or put them both in, but not if you only use one of them instead of the pair. It also seems that you must use them if there are two or more words to, say, the name of your image. Are they only needed in this case or is it best to use them all the time for multibrowser compatibility?

Jamie Evans
jamie@airrie.freeserve.co.uk

A *That's a good question, Jamie, as it gets down to the real nuts and bolts of good old-fashioned coding. In answer to your question, the only time you have to put values/variables in quotes is if that value/variable contains any spaces. For example:*

<IMG SRC=cow.gif ALT="A picture of a cow">

Notice how it is not necessary to put quotes around the value of IMG SRC (cow.gif), however when we get to the ALT tag we need to enclose the phrase in quotes because there are spaces between the words in the variable. With regard to single quotes, these should work absolutely fine. But the real question here is not whether HTML works without quotes – it does; the real question is whether it is good coding practice to leave them out. Ultimately that's for you to decide.

Breaking in the Webbots

Q I have recently finished making my first Web site using FrontPage 98 and have uploaded it to Xoom using CuteFTP, but I can't seem to get my feedback form to work in either the preview section of the FrontPage editor or on the Net. I haven't changed any of the form settings apart from the additional information - how can I make my form work?

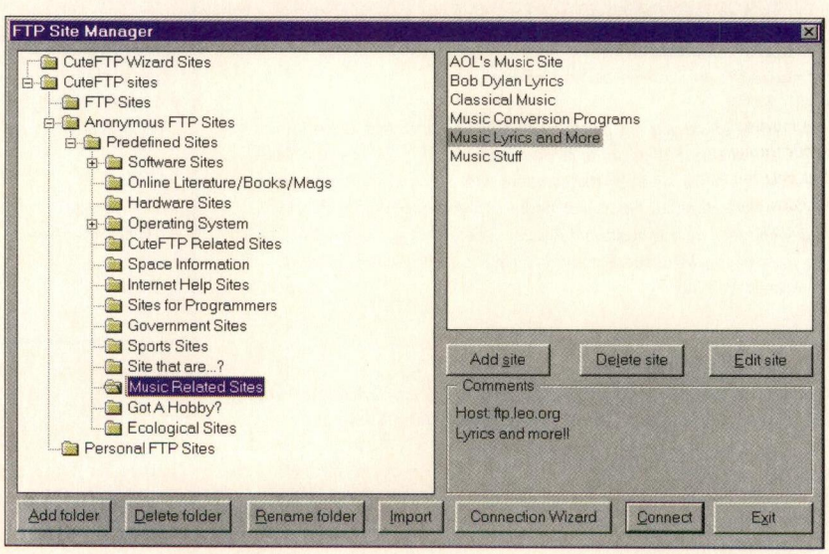
Michael Dunkley
Address supplied

A *The problem you are experiencing is down to FrontPage, by default any new form you create assumes you are putting your pages on a server that supports the FrontPage extensions. These are a variety of small programs that interact with Web pages built in FrontPage. In this case, all the responses to your form would be saved into a file on the server called 'formrslt.htm'.*

However, Xoom doesn't employ FrontPage extensions on its Web servers, not does it provide any form-handling services for users' Web pages, so you'll have to find another way of collecting your feedback. The simplest way of doing this is to have the Web browser send each response to you by email. To do this, the opening FORM tag should read:

<FORM ACTION="mailto:your@email.address" METHOD=POST ENCTYPE="text/plain">

Alternatively, you could employ a third-party form handler, such as that offered by Bravenet, which would work regardless of whether you can run scripts on your Web server or not.



***cuteFTP* is a handy pice of software for uploading your site onto the Web. But remember if you encounter problems it might not be *cuteFTP* that's at fault**

If you're looking for gadgets and gizmos to enhance your pages take a look at the Bravenet site

No search charges

Q What is the easiest way to add a search engine to my site so that visitors can search my pages?

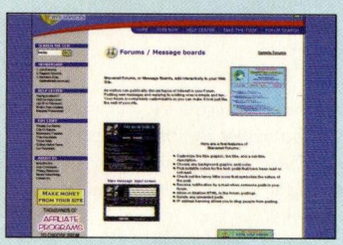
Michael Brrokham
michael@mhb1.freeserve.co.uk

A *It's one thing to submit your site to search engines to attract traffic in the first place, but it's an extremely useful thing - especially on a large site - to be able to search solely within the confines of that site. If you own your own Web server, you can set up a page indexing and complex search facility but, let's face it, most people have their Web pages on a free ISP, and their facilities tend to be somewhat limited. Again, Bravenet provides an excellent, and free, site-specific search engine (see box on page 95) that will run completely independent of where your pages are located.*

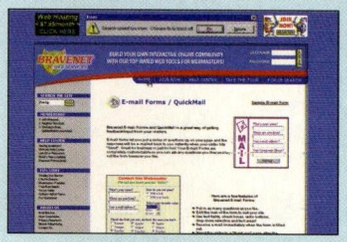
All you need to do is register, then tell Bravenet where your site is, and its indexer will catalogue your pages just like any other search engine. All you need to do now is put the search form on your Web site, and away you go – your site is now searchable. You can even customise the results page to fit in with your site's style, so people will hardly notice you've not provided the service yourself.

Bravenet

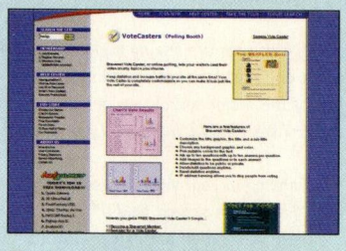
Bravenetwww.bravenet.com. Free Web space often means just the bare essentials when it comes to Web services. But thanks to Bravenet, you can add any number of widgets to your site to help attract - and keep – more visitors. Here are just a few of our favourites:



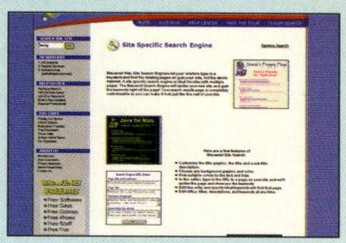
Web forums - add a discussion group to your site, and get your visitors talking to each other. It's a great talking point for your site.



Let your visitors sign up to your very own mailing list – bombard their email addresses with news of all your site's cool new features.



Do you want to know what people think of your site, or what they'd like to see? Simple – add a voting component to the page.



Set up a search engine that only catalogues your site – and, like all these feautures, you can customise it to blend with your site's style.

Vive la différence!

Q If you visit my Web site using Internet Explorer and Netscape, it looks different. If a Netscape user visits my page, I'd like the IE button 'Make this site your home page' to be substituted with a message saying something like 'This site is best viewed with Internet Explorer' and then link to Microsoft's IE download. Obviously, I don't want this message to appear if the visitor is using IE. How can I do this?

Ben
ben@hallsr.globalnet.co.uk

A *My first reaction to this letter is that the real skill in Web design is to make your pages look as similar as possible across browsers and platforms. Admittedly, this is not always possible, and there are occasions when you do want to include code that is only visible to a specific browser. If this is what you'd like to do it can be easily achieved using a simple piece of JavaScript:*

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript"><!—
if (navigator.appName == "Microsoft Internet Explorer") {
   document.write('Make this site your home page');
} else {
   document.write('This site is best viewed with Internet Explorer');
}
// —></SCRIPT>
```

This looks at the properties built in to each Web browser. If IE is detected, the first piece of code will be displayed, otherwise the second will be. Note that you can put any HTML in the document.write('…') statement, but if you want a single quote to appear, you will need to 'escape' the character. This means that instead of interpreting a character as part of the JavaScript language, it will just be taken as being that character. In JavaScript this is done by preceding the character with a backslash (\), as in this example:

```
document.write('The Internet\'s yellowest Web site');
```

To error 404 is human

Q I have seen some Web sites where a custom error message is displayed instead of the normal Internet Explorer message when an error occurs. I think they look far better than the boring IE5 ones, and would like to use some in my Web site. Please could you tell me how this is done and whether it works in other browsers, such as Netscape?

Peter Barnett
peterbarnett@email.com

A *If an error occurs – for example, a page is not found – a code gets sent to the browser describing what went wrong. The browser then interprets the code, and tells us something like 'Error 404 – File not found'. One of the new features of IE5 is its 'friendly' error messages – it gives a more detailed description of the error that you've encountered and suggests a few possible causes.*

However, this is all done at the browser, and has nothing to do with the site you are visiting. The only way to deliver custom error messages is if you have fairly comprehensive control of the Web server. For instance, on the Web site, instead of simply sending an error code back to the browser, the server spots the error and delivers a fully formatted Web page which matches the style of the rest of the site. Not only does this look more attractive, it also serves to downplay the fact that a page is missing (or whatever else the error was). Unfortunately, the majority of Web sites have to make do with the standard messages.

Mellow yellow

Q On my Web site I have a blue sidebar area to provide easy navigation. The text on it is yellow, but when turned into a hyperlink using the <A HREF> tag, it turns a browny-yellow colour and is hard to see. How can I restore it to yellow?

Gareth Thomas
g_thomas@talk21.com

A *In general, to set the link colour to yellow you would add LINK="#FFFF00" to the BODY tag. You might also like to set the colour of the link as it is clicked (use ALINK="#FFFF00") and after it has been visited (VLINK="#FF0000").*

However, in some cases you don't want the links to be the same colour throughout the page. In your page, for example, we're assuming that only the navigation bar is blue – if all links were yellow, they wouldn't show up on the rest of the page. It is possible, though, to specify the colour for a single link, in one of two ways:

```
<A HREF="page.htm"><FONT COLOR="#FFFF00">Link</FONT>
</A>

<A HREF="page.htm" STYLE="color: #FFFF00;">Link</A>
```

The first method is probably the most reliable one to use, since not all browsers support Style Sheets, although we don't guarantee it will work in every browser. The one caveat is to ensure the FONT tags are nested within the A tags. The second method is more elegant and compact, and if you're not yet using Style Sheets, you probably ought to start soon. Have a look at pages 68-69 for our HoTMetaL PRO style sheets's tutorial.

Take a field trip

Q I am looking for a way to check which sites are linked to my site.

Jerry Holliday
jerryholliday@hotmail.com

A *Discovering which Web sites are linking to yours can be an intriguing exercise and it is very easy to do using what is known as 'field searching'. Most of the major search engines enable you to conduct 'field searches', with AltaVista, HotBot, Infoseek, Lycos, and Yahoo! being the best.*

To discover who is linking to your Web site, simply type 'link:www.yourdomain.co.uk' in the search field of the search engine. This will present you with every site (within the index of that search engine) that is linked to yours. Some other field searches you may want to try include image:, text:, title:, and date:

Home page blues

Q I have just started my first attempt at a Web page and am having one small problem. When I enter the Web site address, the browser goes to a white page with a list of the pages and file contents. I would like the address to go to the home page. Any ideas?

Mark Butler
MARK@bradbutler.swinternet.co.uk

A *Don't worry about it. It sounds like you have forgotten to tell your server which page is your home page. It's quite easy to do and essential to identify the beginning of your site. The way we do this is by giving our home page a specific name which servers are able to recognise as the first page of your site. Think about it – how else would the server know which is your home page?*

There are up to four different names you can use which should work on most servers, but certainly the standard name for your first page should always be index.html. You can link to all the other pages on your site from this key entry point. If your Web site is sitting on an NT server (ask your ISP) it may require you to call your first page default.html, however it should recognise index.html anyway. Two other names you may come across are home.html and welcome.html. Give your ISP a call. They are usually very helpful and will be able to tell you what you should call your page dependant on the servers they are using.

Do it yourself

Q There's a lot written about registering with different search engines. There are also a number of companies offering multiple submissions – Submit-it, for example. Who would you recommend for multiple applications?

John Andrew
jandrew@iol.ie

A *There certainly is a lot written about registering your Web site with different search engines. Unfortunately with that comes misinformation, hype and the inevitable con man coaxing you into paying to have it done properly or persuading you to use his special service which registers your site with over 4,000 search engines!*

First, submitting your site to search engines should be seen as an integral part of building a Web site, so getting it done properly should be a priority. The biggest problem with using multiple submitters is that you have no guarantee it has been done, or any way of customising your entry for the requirements of each different search engine or directory. This doesn't mean don't use them at all – after all, there are some really good ones, such as Submit-it (www.submit-it.com). Others you may wish to try include Submit-away (www.submit-away.com), Webpromote (www.webpromote.com), 123Submit (www.123submit.com), SiteSubmit (www.sitesubmit.net), Submit Express (www.submitexpress.com), and Submit Corner (www.submitcorner.com). The Web site uses SimpleSubmit (see www.netmag.co.uk/webbuilder/searchenginesubmit/).

However, to ensure that your page is really going to get on to the search engines, you'll need to do it manually with each engine. It can be a painful process but at least you can guarantee it works. The other plus to self-submission is that you can register each and every page of your site. To submit the pages yourself, go to the home page of the search engine, then find a link saying something like, 'Add URL' or 'Suggest a site'.

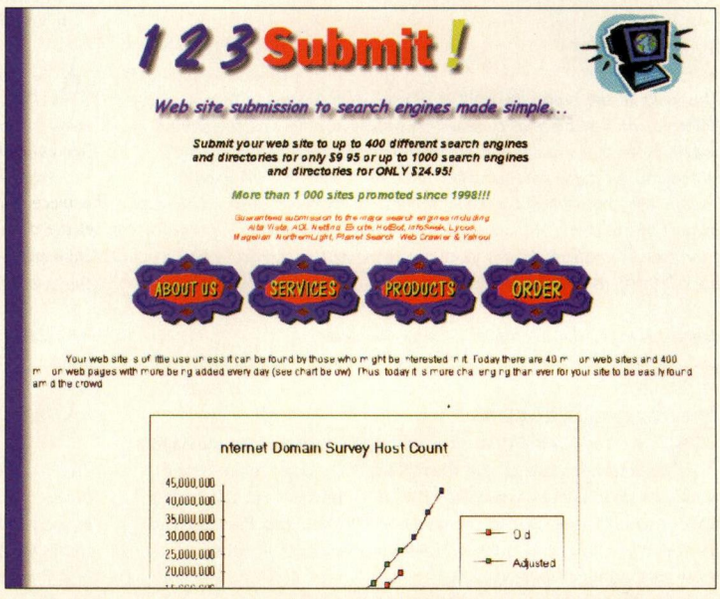
Incidentally, if you want to stand a chance of getting registered on Yahoo! you are going to have to do it yourself. Doing it properly for Yahoo! can be time-consuming but it is well worth the effort when you finally do get listed.

For effective ways to promote your site, take a look at our feature on page 52.

Get the picture

Q I am devising a Web page using Front Page Express. Writing the text and inserting the photos is not a problem, but I emailed the results to a friend who told me everything looked good

Submitting your Web site to search engines is an integral part of building a Web site. No-one will see it if you don't take the trouble to submit it



Multiple submitters are all well and good, but how do you know that they've really done their job properly!

apart from the pictures, which only appeared as squares. What do I have to do to send the Web site showing the text and photos?

HG Ratcliffe,
harry@taunton2.freeserve.co.uk

A I think we've all come up against this problem at some point in our Web design careers. Unfortunately, there is still no easy way to do it. You need to remember that HTML code is really just the glue that binds all the elements in your page together. If you just try to send the plain HTML page, it's like sending someone the glue without all the bits that it is holding together.
In order to send a full HTML page, you'll need to attach the HTML code and all the images to your email. They will need to be named exactly as they are in your local Web page. The recipient of your email will then have to reassemble your Web page on his/her machine, making sure they all sit in the same folder so that the HTML knows where to source the images. The easiest solution is really just to publish the page in your Web space and email your friend the URL!

Back to basics

Q I'd like to build a Web site for a business idea I've had, but I'm a complete beginner, with no code experience. Can you suggest an information source?

Conrad
hamerfamily@tinyworld.co.uk

A There are numerous beginners' guides to HTML on the Web with great tutorials and plenty of resources. Take a look at our basic guide on pages 25–27 as well as our the Web Builder section of our sister mag .net's Web site (www.netmag.co.uk/webbuilder). There's also an excellent beginners' tutorial on the HTML Goodies site (www.htmlgoodies.com). You may find investing in a book useful too. We can recommend HTML 4 for the World Wide Web, Fourth Edition: Visual QuickStart Guide. You can buy it online for around £10 from the Peachpit Press site at www.peachpit.com/ or any of the good online bookstores. High-street bookstores should sell it too.

To HTML or not to HTML?

Q I'm new to this game and I want to build a Web page for a small business. The question is, do I spend my time getting to grips with the codes of HTML or go for a package like Dreamweaver? Can you please explain the advantages of learning HTML? My long-term goal is to design Web pages full time, so what's the best approach?

Zoe
zowie@madasafish.com

A It may seem like a pain, Zoe, but learning HTML coding is an essential part of Web design – whether you are going to be designing just one site or many. It used to be that any Web designer worth their salt would boast of designing all their Web sites using hand-coded HTML. These days, of course, with reliable HTML editors like Dreamweaver, only a masochist would insist on designing their Web pages by hand. However, as a professional Web designer I can tell you that although I seldom create entire pages using hand-coded HTML, I do spend at least 30 per cent of my design time fixing mistakes made by my HTML editor. If I did not know how to hand-code HTML, I'd be completely stuck.
On top of that, learning HTML should be a fundamental first step for anyone who may wish to learn more complex programming languages, such as JavaScript, in the future. An excellent place to start would be our basic guide to HTML on pages 25–27.

What the 'L'?

Q What is the difference between an .htm file and an .html file? Dreamweaver produces .htm – will there be any problems when I upload the files to my Web site? Do I need to convert them, or will browsers treat them as the same?

Chris
ceejay83@postmaster.co.uk

A These days you don't really need to worry about whether your file name suffix is .htm or .html. You see, .htm is really just a shortened version of .html. Before Windows 95 became as widespread as it is today, the file-naming conventions for certain operating systems (like Windows 3.1) meant that anything after the '.' couldn't have more than three letters. You can safely keep your file name suffixes to .htm without any problem, unless of course your server requires you to have a four-letter suffix for server consistency.
By the way, when you are saving a Web page in Dreamweaver, you can simply add an 'l' on to the end of the.htm suffix it offers you as default.

Automatic send-off

Q Can you tell me the code I need to use so that when my index.html page loads (containing a few images) it will automatically start to load my main page (main.html) in the same window.

Allanray@muller26.freeserve.co.uk

A Try popping this piece of code into your head tags. You can set the amount of time (seconds) before you want the new page to load up.

```
<head>
<title>Allan's Page</title>
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="5
;URL=main.html">
</head>
```

Got a problem?

If you've got a technical problem send your query to pracweb@futurenet.co.uk and we'll do our very best to help you.

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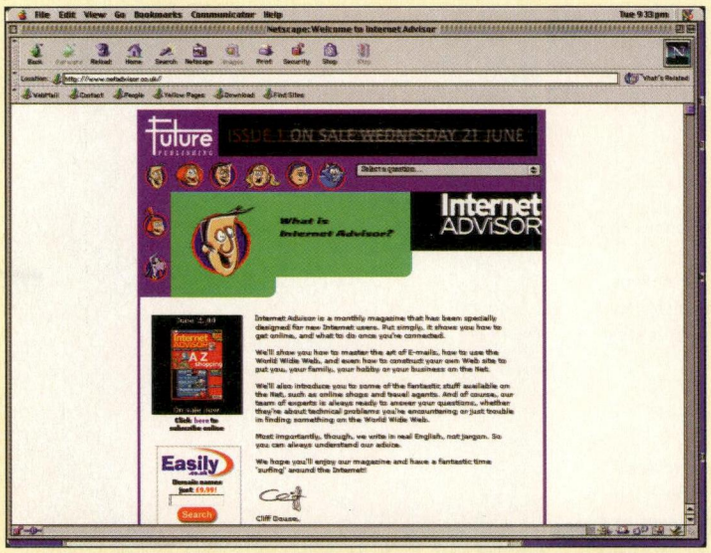
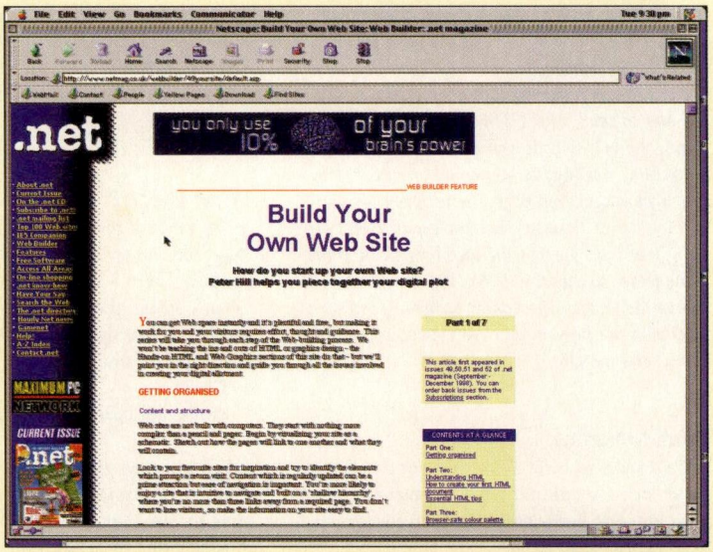


INTERNET ADVISOR www.netadvisor.co.uk

Internet Advisor caters for people who are new to the Net. The site provides an overview of the print magazine with an opportunity for you to find out more about what's available online. It's not so much a tutorial site, but a site of Web resources and for places to surf. Also, if you want to find out more about free Internet access without any jargon, www.netadvisor.co.uk is the place to look.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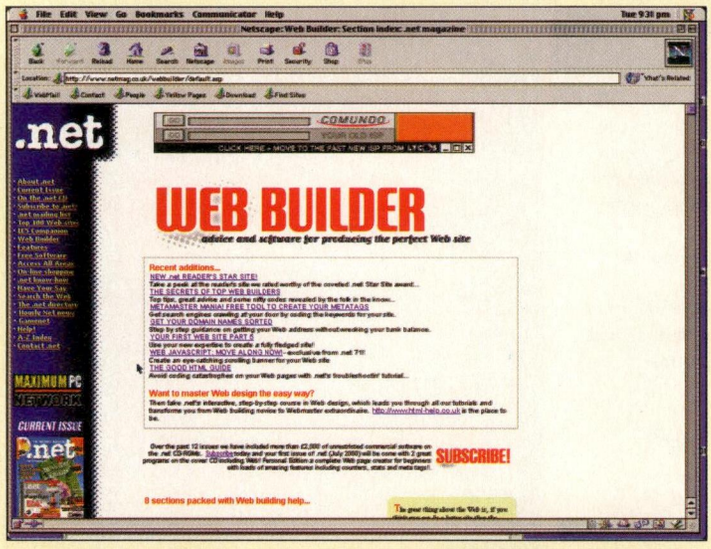
Build Your Own Web Site
How do you start up your own Web site? Peter Hill helps you piece together your digital plot
GETTING ORGANISED

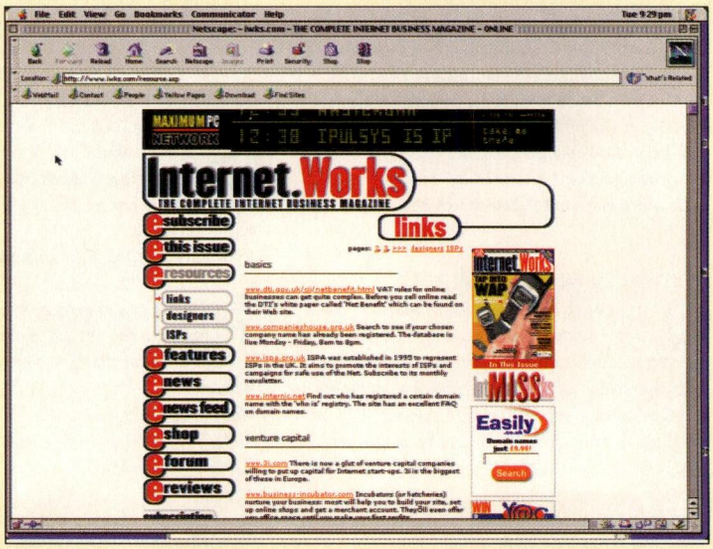
.NET www.netmag.co.uk

Of all the Internet mags *.net* has established itself as a firm favourite with real Internet enthusiasts. Its Web site is equally good – packed with content from this award-winning title. But that's not all. The Web site covers everything from free downloads to tutorials, reviews and an extensive community where you can have your say and take part in discussions with other *.net* visitors.



.NET WEB BUILDER www.netmag.co.uk/webbuilder

The Web builder tutorials on the netmag site are one of the best resources available to Web designers. The archive is full of useful articles, tutorials and advice. The site is updated regularly and you can learn about valuable things such as metatags, domain names, JavaScript and good old HTML in more detail than we've covered in *Practical Web Pages*. So if you'd like to find out more...



INTERNET WORKS www.iwks.com

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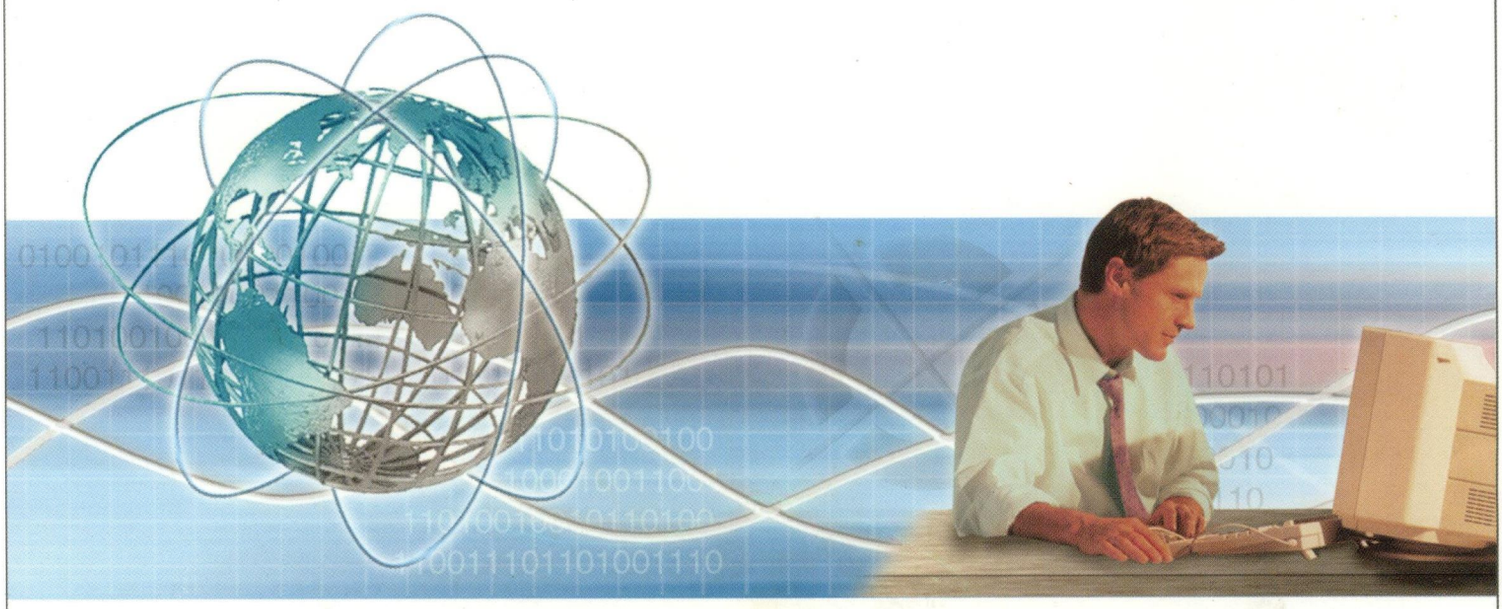

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